

R E M A R K S
O N T H E
L I F E and W R I T I N G S
O F
P L A T O.

W I T H

ANSWERS to the principal OBJECTIONS
against him; and a general View of his
DIALOGUES.

E D I N B U R G H:

Printed for A. MILLAR, London; A. KINCAID and J. BELL, Edr.

M D C C L X.

REMARKS

ON THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

PLATO



Answers to the principal objections
against him, and a discovery of his

DIALOGUES

EDINBURGH:

Printed for A. MILLAR, London, A. Kincaid and J. Bell, Edin.

MDCCLXXII.

A C C O U N T

O F T H E

L I F E

O F

P L A T O.

THE characters of ingenious men appear worthy of description, because their labours are important to human life. Disputes also frequently arise concerning the merit of philosophers, and their different systems, which few are willing to examine accurately, and determine for themselves.

A

THIS

THIS renders some general account of these matters useful.

CONSIDERING the fluctuating condition of human affairs, the perpetual revolutions in empire, knowledge, industry and manners, it is not possible that any system, either of natural or moral philosophy, should always maintain an equal influence.

THOSE systems which are the meer creatures of imagination, may very well give place to newer fancies, and these to newer ones without end. But works which are founded on the genuine principles of nature, which are regulated by truth, which move the springs of action in the soul, and incite to virtue and goodness, can never be totally disregarded, and will always return into credit and esteem, in proportion as the humour of the time returns to sobriety.

WHEN we judge of any writer, we should make allowances for the age he lived in; the

LIFE of PLATO. 3

the country, and other circumstances by which he was favoured or retarded. This would prevent extravagant admiration, or the prejudices that may arise upon unfair comparisons.

THERE is scarce any author whose fame has been so variable as Plato's. The taste of this present age does not seem to be great for books of ancient learning; and the writings of Plato are much neglected among the rest. Even some of those who assume to themselves a sort of dictatorship in affairs of literature, have decided against him with great vehemence.

IT seemed necessary, therefore, to give some account of his character and philosophy, in a manner different from what has hitherto been done; chiefly with a view to obviate the most important objections, and incite people to acquire a more thorough acquaintance with Plato's works, being persuaded that they would be of great service

to mankind, and tend to inspire them with just and rational sentiments concerning the fundamental principles of religion, morals, and government; sentiments which are of the highest concern at all times, and perhaps never were more needful to be inculcated than at present.

IN our account of Plato, it is worth while to mention, that he was born at Athens, the most populous and elegant city of Greece. He had seen his country in its greatest glory; and though he was witness to many distresses and revolutions in its affairs, yet, during his lifetime, Athens may be said, upon the whole, to have continued a powerful and independent state.

BESIDE the military glory of the Athenians, they are distinguished as the people who carried learning, and the finer arts, to a degree of perfection, perhaps greater than ever was attained at any one place of the world, in an equal time.

THERE

THERE was no compleat and regular establishment at Athens for educating youth, such as are common in modern states. The ordinary course of their studies was more limited than ours; but there was great care taken to form their manners.

THEY had masters for the language of their country, for music and gymnastic exercises: this was the common course of education. One of the most faithful and best accomplished slaves waited on each boy wherever he went, and had entire command of him, which was of great use to preserve his early years from intemperance. But before the days of Plato, or at least before those of Socrates, there seems not to have been any publick teacher of philosophy who resided constantly at Athens. The Sophists, or they who pretended to teach natural or moral philosophy and oratory, did not continue long in any place, but travelled from one state to another to make money.

ACCORDINGLY

6 ACCOUNT of the

ACCORDINGLY we find, when they came to Athens, that their lodgings were crowded with scholars; not boys, but young men who wanted to improve themselves for the service of their country.

SOME of those Sophists were men of extraordinary merit. As for instance Prodicus, who had even Socrates for his disciple; and of whom the famous fable of the *judgment of Hercules* remains,

BUT there were also many false pretenders to learning and philosophy among them; and the most ignorant and assuming had often the greatest number of admirers.

IT was Plato's good fortune to have Socrates for his instructor, a man of great wisdom and sagacity, very able to support the interests of truth and virtue, and expose the arrogant pretences of the Sophists. He applied himself chiefly to morals and improvement

improvement of the heart, as the most valuable of all studies. His name is so well known in story, that we need not describe him. One cannot think of such a character as his without reverence and admiration; at the same time he must applaud the ingenuity and gratitude of Plato, who used to bless God that he was born in the days of Socrates.

IN so free a state as Athens, the highest stations and honours of the republick were open to every citizen: but their nobility generally had the ascendant in elections for important offices, because they had better education for executing them, and superior influence by means of their estates.

PLATO was descended from the most renowned nobility, being of the same family with Solon; and he had a fortune suitable to his birth. Having studied the language of his country, he acquired some knowledge of music and painting: he excelled

celled in the gymnastic exercises, and employed part of his earlier time in poetry; but burnt his poems after hearing the discourses of Socrates. He served also in the army upon several expeditions, and acquitted himself with honour.

BEING thus accomplished to serve the publick, he was waiting the time appointed by law, *viz.* the age of thirty, when he might enter upon the administration of affairs, but afterwards altered his plan, for reasons which we shall take in his own words, and which may at the same time show the absurdity of the usual common-place inquiries and declamations about the *active and contemplative life*, at least so far as concerns the authority and example of Plato.

AT the end of the famous Peloponesian war, the constitution of the Athenian government was changed, and the supreme power lodged in the hands of thirty.

“ SOME

“ SOME of these, says Plato, *in his letter*
 “ *to Dion's friends*, were my relations, some
 “ my acquaintance, and they invited me
 “ immediately to share in that administra-
 “ tion to which I had so good a title. For
 “ my part I was affected in a manner very
 “ consistent with my youth. I imagined
 “ that now the government of the state
 “ would be changed from its former
 “ abuses, to a plan of rectitude and justice,
 “ and therefore observed their conduct
 “ with attention: but soon saw that they
 “ demonstrated the times of the former
 “ administration, to be a golden age in
 “ comparison of theirs.

“ AMONG other things, my friend the
 “ old man Socrates, (whom I am not
 “ ashamed to call the justest man of that
 “ age,) with some others, were commanded
 “ to bring by violence one of the citizens
 “ to their tribunal, that he might be put
 “ to death. They laid these commands
 “ on Socrates, to involve him in a share

10 ACCOUNT of the

“ of their actions whether he would or
“ not. But he disobeyed, and chose to
“ risque every thing rather than be a part-
“ ner of their impious deeds. However,
“ in a little time after this the power of
“ the thirty was abolished, and all that
“ system of government.

“ AND now I was again inclined to en-
“ gage in the management of publick bu-
“ siness, though not so strongly as before;
“ for there were several things done in those
“ times of confusion, which one could not
“ help being sorry for. Neither, indeed,
“ is it to be wondered at, though some
“ took rather too severe revenge on their
“ enemies at this revolution, notwithstand-
“ ing that the principal men, who brought
“ it about, behaved with the utmost mo-
“ deration.

“ BUT, by misfortune, some of those
“ who got into power, accused my friend
“ Socrates himself, charging him with the
“ most

“ most hainous of all crimes, and the most
 “ distant from Socrates’s character, *impiety*.

“ THESE therefore accused, and those
 “ condemned and put to death, a man who
 “ would have no share with the former
 “ wicked administration, in an affair which
 “ concerned one of themselves, who were
 “ his friends while they were fugitives and
 “ in misfortune.

“ WHEN I considered these things,
 “ and the people who had the manage-
 “ ment, and the laws and prevailing man-
 “ ners, the more I reviewed them, the
 “ more difficult I found it would be to
 “ serve the publick aright.

“ IT was impossible for me to act with-
 “ out the assistance of faithful friends and
 “ associates; but these were not easily to
 “ be found among my former connections;
 “ and it would be a difficult matter to form
 “ new ones: for our state was not any

“ longer administrated according to the
 “ genius and principles of our ancestors;
 “ both the spirit and letter of the laws
 “ were corrupted to a very great degree.

“ Wherefore I, who formerly was full of
 “ ardor to enter upon the publick manage-
 “ ment, when I considered these things,
 “ and saw how all was going to con-
 “ fusion, became at last averse to it: re-
 “ solving however not to cease from watch-
 “ ing when any more favourable opportu-
 “ nity should occur for correcting these
 “ abuses, or the whole constitution of the
 “ state, and always be ready at the proper
 “ season for acting.

“ By degrees I discovered that all states
 “ at present are badly constituted, and their
 “ constitutions incurable without some
 “ wonderful piece of good conduct, se-
 “ conded by fortune, and was obliged to
 “ own, in praise of true philosophy, *That*
 “ *from thence alone it is that we can discover*
 “ all

“ all the true interests either of the publick,
 “ or of particular persons ; and that the hu-
 “ man race will never be free from miseries,
 “ until they who are true philosophers get the
 “ government and administration into their
 “ hands ; or they who have the supreme power
 “ become true philosophers.”

IN consequence of these reflexions, Plato
 devoted himself entirely to Philosophy.
 After the death of Socrates, they say, he
 heard Cratylus the scholar of Heraclitus,
 and Hermogenes who was the follower of
 Parmenides.

THERE are dialogues of Plato's which
 bear the name of each of these philoso-
 phers ; both of them are extremely subtle
 and curious, especially the Parmenides ; by
 which we may see that this man was a
 very acute reasoner, and that it was he
 who first put Socrates himself upon the pro-
 per method of inquiring after truth, viz.
 by supposing a thing to exist in certain cir-
 cumstances

cumstances and relations, and examining what would be the consequence; then change the supposition, and examine still: so that, according to Parmenides, you can never find out truth till you learn to search for it a great while,

THE specimen of his method, given in that dialogue, appears manifestly to have been a pattern to the Socratic manner of reasoning; and seems indeed to be an imitation of the investigatory method in geometry, if not the original.

AFTER this, Plato travelled to Cyrene, and studied geometry with Theodorus, and became one of the greatest geometricians of that age. Accordingly when the oracle of Delos proposed to the Greeks the problem of doubling the cube, Plato explained the meaning of that oracle, and was the first who gave a solution of the problem. It is preserved to us by Eutocius. Mathematics naturally tend to improve and strengthen

strengthen the mind. They give a relish for truth, and greater ability of distinguishing it from error, as they fix the attention, and accustom one to proceed from the simpler cases, to those that are more complex. Hence also, they habitually lead one to the most simple and obvious method of representing truth to others.

THE effects of this science may be observed almost every where through Plato's works, in the frequent illustrations and proofs borrowed from geometry; and the strong and perspicuous method of his reasoning.

HE is said to have written over his school, *Let no one enter here who is unacquainted with geometry.* The same caution may be justly given to those who read his writings; and especially such as pretend to criticize them. From Cyrene, Plato went to Egypt *, to improve his knowledge of astronomy,

* ACCORDING to Laertius, Plato came from Cyrene to Italy, and went from Italy to Egypt: but this does not seem probable, because Cyrene is so near Egypt, and because Plato was carried out of Sicily, not to Egypt, but to Ægina.

16 ACCOUNT of the

astronomy, to be instructed in the rites and traditions of the priests, and observe the nature of their government.

CONSIDERING the extremely beautiful and masterly directions which Plato has given in his book of laws, relative to the proper use and intent of travelling, one must wonder how he could ever be so far mistaken and misrepresented, as if his chief design in going to Egypt was to sell his oil.

IN those early times, the intercourse of nations was imperfect; money could not easily be remitted into foreign countries; the correspondencies of merchants were few; and there were no bills of exchange.

PLATO, by managing his own affairs, had farther opportunities of becoming acquainted with the different characters of mankind, and could more easily conceal his own from the Egyptians; for at that time those *animals of the Nile used to drive strangers*

ers away, by their meats and sacrifices, and rude proclamations *.

FROM Egypt, they say, he intended to have gone among the Persian Magi, but the turbulent state of Asia hindered him. Wherefore he next went to Italy, and studied the philosophy of Pythagoras.

WE find from his letters, that he had contracted a particular friendship with Archytas of Tarentum, who appears to have been the same with him whom Horace calls *Maris & Terræ numeroque carentis arenæ menforem*. This friendship continued with unreserved affection through their whole lives.

WHILE Plato was at Tarentum, there happened a remarkable eruption of mount Ætna, and he went over to see that phenomenon; at the same time desirous to improve his knowledge of politics acquired by former travels.

C

THE

* De Legibus, lib. xii.

THE different states of Sicily were proper subjects of observation. It would especially be instructive to view the tyrant of Syracuse in the exercise of his power, and mark the consequences of despotic government.

AT this time he became acquainted with Dion, a young man of fine genius, brother-in-law to Dionysius, and inspired him with an ardent love of virtue and liberty, which was never afterwards extinguished.

WE are told that the old tyrant Dionysius sent for Plato, and heard him at the first with pleasure, but soon took such offence at the freedom of his discourses, that he sold him for a slave, as Diodorus Siculus says, or, as Diogenes Laertius has it, sent him away with a Lacedemonian captain, who landed him in Ægina where he was sold, but immediately ransomed and sent home.

He

HE had now been abroad for twelve years or more; not meerly to see strange things and distant nations, but to observe their characters and manners, to profit by the instructions and conversation of learned men, to improve his mind by a general acquaintance with mankind, and, from his remarks on different countries, form plans for the good of the whole.

HIS natural temper was humane and modest; he improved and fixed his manner by long study of morals, and attentive observations of human life and policy.

THESE advantages greatly embellished his character, and took off that stiffness which people commonly have who are acquainted with nothing but speculation: and there is a spirit of mildness and humanity that breathes through all his laws and institutions.

UPON his return to Athens he settled in the Academia, a place of exercise in the suburbs, where the adjoining woods and shady groves afforded proper opportunities for meditation *. Here he had a small country seat, with an orchard or two, remaining of his inheritance, having generously distributed the rest among his brethren. In this place he continued teaching philosophy gratis, and composing several of his works, till the death of Dionysius the elder, which happened about seventeen years after Plato's return.

AT this time his studies were interrupted, the account of which we shall take in his own words, from the letter which has been already quoted.

“ WHEN I came to Italy and Sicily for the first time, that life which they call happy, and their luxurious entertainments, by no means pleased me; such as feasting
twice

* Inter sylvas academi quærere verum.

twice a-day, and never sleeping alone at night, with other pursuits consequent upon that way of life.

“FOR, from these manners, a wise man never can be formed, not even of all the men under heaven, if he is bred up in them from his youth; neither will he acquire any valuable dispositions, nor become a man of sobriety: and the same may be said of every other virtue. Neither will any state remain in quiet, let the laws and constitutions be what they will, while the people imagine that they may spend their money on extravagancies, and that they ought to be idle to every pursuit except feasting, drinking, and toiling in the gratification of sensual desires.

“OF necessity also such a state will be continually changing, from democracy to oligarchy or tyranny; and the people in power will never so much as bear with the name of a just and equal administration.

MEETING

“MEETING with Dion, who was then a young man, while I explained in my discourses what I thought best for mankind, and counselled him to act accordingly, I was, unknown to myself some how, contriving the future dissolution of the tyrant’s power. For Dion, being naturally very apt to learn, was more rapidly and strongly convinced by my discourses, than any young man I ever knew, and determined in the rest of his life to excel the generality of Italians and Sicilians, by preferring virtue to pleasure, and every kind of luxury. From henceforth he was looked upon with an evil eye by those who lived according to the principles of despotism.

“AFTER Dionysius’s death, Dion observed that he was not the only one whose sentiments were corrected by right reason; he saw that there were others also who had just notions of things; but these were few. He hoped to make the young Dionysius of this number, by the assistance of the Gods; and

and if he could effectuate this, he was sensible that the happiness of his own life, and of all the Syracusians, would be prodigiously advanced. For this purpose he judged it necessary that I should by all means come to Syracuse as soon as possible, and bear a part; for he remembered his meeting and mine, how quickly he had been inspired with the love of the best and most glorious life; with which, if he could now inspire Dionysius, he expected to establish a very happy constitution through the whole country, without bloodshed and slaughter, or any of the evils which have now happened.

“ DION, having rightly considered these things, persuaded Dionysius to send for me. He himself also sent, entreating me to come in all haste, lest others, in the mean time, should get about Dionysius, and turn him from virtue to a different manner of life.

“ WHAT opportunity, said he, can we wait for more seasonable than this, which
by

by divine providence now offers? He described Dionysius's dominions and power in Italy and Sicily; his youth, his vehement desire after learning and philosophy; mentioning also his domestics and cousins, how easily they could be brought to those principles, and that way of life which I had always professed; and that they would be very capable of persuading Dionysius: so that now, if ever, said he, there is the greatest probability that philosophers shall become the rulers of a mighty state.

“THESE, and many other things, were adduced to persuade me. For my part, I had no great confidence in the present dispositions of young men, because their inclinations are always hasty, and often contradictory to one another; but I knew Dion to be naturally of a steady temper, and now about the middle age of life.

“WHEREFORE, considering with myself, whether or not, and in what manner I
should

should go, I determined, that if one ever was to undertake the execution of what he had been meditating concerning laws and a republick, he should attempt it now; for if I could persuade but one man, I should be able to accomplish all other good things.

“ WITH these thoughts, and with this bold intention, I sailed from home; not for the reason that some have imagined *, but the most powerful one, a reverence for myself, lest I should at any time appear to myself of some obscure repute perhaps in speculations; but never at any time willing to adventure upon action; lest also I should thus betray my friend Dion, whose situation was very dangerous. Supposing also that he suffered any thing, and being expelled by Dionysius and his other enemies, coming hither an exile from your country, he should have thus bespoke me; O Plato, I come a fugitive to you, not for want of heavy armed infantry nor horses to repel

D my

* He had been slandered, that he went for the love of money and luxurious entertainments.

my foes, but for want of reasons and persuasion, which I knew you were master of, capable of turning young men to a life of justice and virtue, of friendship and affection for one another. For want of these, so far as concerns you, I have left Syracuse and am here. The reproach indeed that comes upon you on my account is small; but as for Philosophy which you are always celebrating, and saying it is disregarded by the rest of mankind, How can you deny that you have not also betrayed its cause, so far as it depended upon you? Had I lived at Megara, you would have come to my assistance upon such an important occasion, or owned yourself the most worthless of all mortals. But now while you object the length of the voyage, the greatness of the danger and the toil, do you think ever to escape the imputation of worthlessness? Very far from it.

“ HAD such things been said to me,
What decent answer could I have made to
them?

them? None at all. I therefore came upon as rational and just motives as it is possible for a man to have. For these reasons, leaving my own employments, which were honourable enough, I came under the power of despotic government, which seemed neither consistent with my principles nor my person.

“NEVERTHELESS I maintained my freedom, and preserved the sacred laws of hospitality, and the honour of philosophy blameless, which would have been highly reproached, if through sloth or cowardice I had received any affront. Upon my arrival I found all Dionysius’s household full of dissention and slanders against Dion, as if aspiring after the sovereignty. I defended him therefore as I could; but that was very little; and, about four months after this, Dionysius accusing Dion of an intention to usurp the government, put him aboard a small vessel and banished him disgracefully. Upon this all we who were

Dion's friends, were afraid lest the tyrant should blame and punish us as sharers in the same design. It was also reported through Syracuse, that Dionysius had put me to death as the cause of all that had happened. But he perceiving us in this condition, and apprehending that something worse might happen through our despair, received us very kindly. He spoke also very civilly to me, and bid me not be afraid, and intreated me by all means to stay; for he had some honour by my staying with him, but none by my flight; so that he pretended earnestly to intreat me; and we know that the intreaties of Tyrants have a mixture of constraint in them. Mean time he contrived to prevent my sailing, having carried me into the castle and lodged me there, from whence any ship-master would have been so far from carrying me (when Dionysius had forbidden) that unless he himself had sent express orders for that purpose, no trader, nor keeper of the passes, would have suffered me to go away by myself,

self, but immediately would have seized and carried me back to Dionysius.

“ AND now again, on the contrary, it was currently reported, that Dionysius was become wonderfully fond of Plato. This was partly true; for he respected me still more, in process of time, as he became better acquainted with my character. He wanted that I should praise him more than Dion, and esteem him more my friend; and was exceedingly *ambitious* about this matter. But he would not submit to the best means by which this might have been effected, if ever it could, (namely that he should be with me, and become familiar, by hearing and learning the principles of philosophy,) because through the misrepresentations of slanderers, he dreaded lest he should be somehow seduced, and Dion accomplish all his designs.

“ HOWEVER, I bore patiently, keeping in view the intention for which I came,
if

if by any means he could be brought to some taste for a philosophic life. But he got the better of me, persisting in his opposition.

PLATO breaks off here, and gives many valuable advices to Dion's friends, agreeable to the Situation of their affairs; some of which will be useful in all ages. For these we shall refer to the original, and proceed with his narrative.

“ HAVING, by one means or other, persuaded Dionysius to let me go, we agreed, that after the war (at that time in Sicily) was over, he should send for Dion and me to settle the affairs of the government on a more stable foundation; and he begged of Dion not to think himself banished, but only as having changed his abode; and I consented to come upon these conditions.

“ WHEN

“WHEN the peace was concluded he sent for me; he begged of Dion to have patience one year longer, but intreated me by all means to come. Dion at the same time desired and requested that I would go; for there was a strong report from Sicily, that Dionysius was now again become wonderfully in love with philosophy: so that Dion earnestly begged of me to accept the invitation.

“I was indeed sensible that many young men had been thus affected by philosophy; however, I thought it would be the safer way, at that time, to abstain from intermeddling with their affairs; and I offended them both by answering, that I was now an old man, and that none of these proposals were agreeable to our former paction.

“It is probable that Archytas came to Sicily some time after this; for I had, before I came away, made an alliance and friendship between Dionysius and the Tarentines.

rentines. There were also people in Syracuse who had got some instructions from Dion; and there were others also full of certain lectures in philosophy: they, I imagine, attempted to discourse with Dionysius on those Subjects, believing he had been taught all my sentiments.

“HE naturally is not inapt to learn, and is exceeding jealous of his honour. Probably what was said pleased him; and he was ashamed to have it known that he had never heard any such things when I was there. Hence he partly became desirous of hearing these things more fully, partly his vanity incited him. I have already mentioned the reasons why he never before heard of those matters. When therefore I had escaped home, and had now denied his second invitation, I verily believe he was desirous at any rate to prevent people from thinking that, having experience of him, I despised his genius, character, and way of life; and, being disgusted, was
unwilling

unwilling to come. I ought however to tell the truth, and bear with patience; though any one, after hearing what has happened, should despise my philosophy; and think the tyrant a man of address.

“DIONYSIUS therefore, the third time, sent a vessel for me, with three banks of oars, to make the voyage the easier. He also sent Archidemus, whom he believed to be the man that I had the greatest value for, (being one of Archytas’s friends,) and with him others of my acquaintance in Sicily. All of them agreed in the same story, *how wonderfully Dionysius was devoted to philosophy*. He himself sent a very long letter, knowing how much I was concerned for Dion, and how much Dion wanted that I should sail. His letter was contrived for these purposes: so that after the first salutation he began,

“If you are persuaded by me to come to Sicily just now, in the first place, the affairs

E

of

of Dion shall be settled in the manner that you shall desire ; for I know that you will desire only what is reasonable, and I will grant it ; but if you do not come, you shall obtain none of these things which you desire, neither concerning Dion's affairs, nor any thing else.

“ HE added many other arguments which it would be tedious and superfluous to mention. Besides this, there were letters from Archytas, and the people of Tarentum, in praise of Dionysius, and that if I did not come now, his alliance, which I had procured, and which was of great advantage to their state, would be entirely destroyed.

“ SUCH was the invitation I had at that time ; the people of Italy and Sicily dragging me, and the people of Athens, injudiciously with intreaties, pushing me, as it were, away. And the same arguments were repeated, That I ought not to abandon Dion, nor the people of Tarentum my friends. It also occurred to myself, That a
young

young man hearing things worthy of consideration, and being of a good genius, he might probably fall in love with a life of virtue. That I ought to examine accurately into the truth of this affair, and not make myself the subject of so just a reproach, if these things were truly represented. I went therefore, covering myself up with these reasons, though much in dread, and not prognosticating favourably, as you may believe. After I was come, I resolved, in the first place, to examine whether Dionysius was really fired with the love of philosophy; otherwise, those stories had come to Athens without foundation. And there is a genteel way enough for making this trial, and very proper for despotic princes; especially if they have heard a great deal about those things, which I found to be Dionysius's case. You should represent to such people the nature and quality of that whole affair, with how much pains and labour it is attained. He who hears this, if he is truly philosophical, and has any merit,

or affinity to it, being of a divine temper, he thinks there is some admirable road pointed out, and that he ought now to exert himself, and that he would not deserve to live if he did otherwise. Wherefore, encouraging himself, and him who shows the way, he gives not over till he has finished the whole, or acquired the ability of tracing them out alone. According to these, and the like sentiments, does such a person live, acting his part in whatever station he is placed, but in every thing stedfast to philosophy; and to that kind of diet every day which may contribute most to render him acute to learn, of a good memory, a sound reasoner, and a sober man; and will persist in abhorring the contrary manner of life.

“ BUT they who are not truly philosophers, but only coloured over with superficial opinions, like people who are sunburnt, when they discover what sort of a thing learning is, how great the labour, and

and what the daily manner of life and diet proper for the undertaking: some, thinking it a very difficult and hard work for them, are never able so much as to attempt it. Others, again, persuade themselves that they have already sufficiently heard the whole of these affairs, and stand in need of no more.

“THUS, then, there is a very clear and certain method of trying those who are self-conceited and unable to toil; so that there never is occasion for blaming him who teaches, but themselves as incapable of the necessary application. Upon this plan did I discourse with Dionysius: for neither did I describe every thing, nor did he desire it, pretending that he knew many of them, and those the most important, by other peoples instructions, &c.”

AT this occasion we may observe, that Plato had some private doctrines which he concealed from the vulgar. And he here insinuates,

insinuates, that any things published to that purpose in his laws, or any where else, were not his most serious sentiments. He shows that Dionysius could not possibly understand these matters by hearing him once, because he never spoke of them directly: that they required long application and habitual attention. Then knowledge, like the kindling of a flame, suddenly springs up in the soul, and henceforth nourishes itself.

WHAT I write, says Plato, *I would wish to be as good as possible. Nothing could give me greater pain, than that my writings should do harm.* If I imagined, therefore, that these things would be useful to the vulgar, what better employment could I have in life than to publish them, and *display nature to all mankind?* But I do not think the most part of men would be better for inquiry about such things, except a very few who are able to find them out upon a small hint. Others would be filled only with an unseasonable contempt, or vain conceit, as
if

if they had learned some things of vast importance.

THEN he gives other reasons, by way of a *Tale* and *Decoy*, (as he calls it;) the general meaning of which seems to be, that what commonly passes for learning, is only a sort of introduction to it: that few people know what is true learning, on account of their irregular and preposterous method of study, or because some have capacity to learn particular things, but want inclination, others have inclination without capacity, &c. But when people are sufficiently instructed in these things which may be called preliminary, if they are persons of a happy genius and good heart, the principles of true knowledge spring up in their minds; but if otherwise, not.

And they who have arrived at the knowledge of sublime truths will have just notions of their value, and not expose them to the abuses and contradictions of the vulgar.

So

So that, says he, you may hence judge whether Dionysius, or any one else who has pretended to *write upon the chief and first principles of nature*, has ever heard or been taught my real sentiments.

WE see, however, that this mystery concerned the *chief and first principles of nature*, by which we may understand his notions concerning the heathen system of divinity, and the prevailing opinions in astronomy, which were interwoven with their religion. And in truth these opinions must have great influence on religion in all ages. *The noblest employment of the mind of man, is the study of the works of his Creator. To him whom the science of nature delighteth, every object giveth a proof of his God; every thing that proveth it giveth cause of adoration* *.

WE are certain that, even in those early times, the Pythagoreans understood the true system of the heavens. They delivered it

* OEconomy of human life.

it as a secret to their disciples, but spoke of it to the populace in obscure terms.

TELL an ignorant heathen, abruptly, that the whole system of his religion was false, and that there was no such God as Apollo who drove the chariot of the sun round the world every day; but, on the contrary, that the sun stood still in the centre, and the earth revolved on its axis, and round the sun, &c. these things would serve only to perplex or puff him up with vanity.

LET us even take an example in our own times. Suppose some philosopher, just now in Spain or Italy, so imprudent as to tell his scholars plainly, that the whole popish system was absurd, also that the earth moved round, and the sun stood still; this would be apt to make the inconsiderate youth despise all religion, and vain that he knew so much, while others were involved in error. This vanity might also render him less pa-

F
tient,

tient, and less capable of instruction in things of importance concerning life and morals.

PLATO, by inverting Homer's words, seems cautiously to hint of his own time, that freedoms, with regard to the heathen system of belief, would have dangerous consequences: for, says he, men, *and not the Gods*, would deprive such a one of his senses. And we may say concerning the modern heretic, as above supposed, that the inquisition would burn him.

BUT no wise man would behave in this manner. He would teach natural philosophy by plain experiments, and mathematical demonstration: yet he would submit to the Pope's decrees against the motion of the earth *. By long repeated instructions, he would endeavour to inspire right notions of God and Religion, and of the fundamental

* Cæterum latis a summis pontificibus contra telluris motum decretis nos obsequi profiteamur.

mental and immutable truths of Morality. These principles being fully imbibed by a well disposed mind, of an ingenious and philosophical turn, the absurdities of the popish religion, and all that system of priest-craft, would of their own accord strike his mind at once, without any formal explanation.

THUS have I followed the conjecture that appeared most probable.

PLATO concludes with this farther argument, that Dionysius never understood him: for, says he, "If he learned those truths which are proper for instruction to the free-born soul, how could he ever, with so much facility, affront the man who was master of them, and showed him the way?

"HE had hitherto allowed Dion to get the revenue of his estate. But in a little after my arrival, he would not allow the factor to send it to Peloponnesus, as if he

44 ACCOUNT of the

had forgotten his letter to me altogether: for he said that the estate belonged not to Dion, but to the son of Dion, who was his nephew, and he the tutor in law. By this I might see clearly Dionysius's love for philosophy, and be angry or not as I had a mind.

“IT was now summer, and the ships were failing away. I thought I had not greater reason to be angry with Dionysius than with myself, and with those who had forced me to come the third time over Scylla, and revisit the devouring Charybdis. I resolved to tell Dionysius, that I could by no means stay while Dion was thus insulted. But he gave me fair words, and requested of me not to go, thinking it would not be for his honour that I should return and bring the news of such actions so soon. Finding he could not persuade me, he said he would prepare for my voyage: for I had been contriving, in my anger, to get aboard some transport-vessel, resolving to suffer any hardship

ship

ship if he should hinder me, seeing I had received a manifest injury, and had done none. He therefore perceiving that I was absolutely resolved to go, falls upon this contrivance to detain me till the ships were failed. He comes next day with a very plausible story, and says, "I would have Dion and his affairs, no longer an occasion of difference, as they have been frequently, between you and me. For your sake I will do this for him, I agree that he shall get his own, and live in Peloponnesus, not as a fugitive, but as one who has liberty to come here when he, and I, and you, who are his friends, shall think fit for our common interest. These things are on condition that he does not plot against me: for which you and your friends, and Dion's friends here, are to be sureties, and let him give you security. The money which he gets must be disposed of in Peloponnesus and at Athens, in the hands of whom you shall judge proper. Let Dion have the interest, but have no power of lifting the principal without
your

your consent. If he had the use of such a sum, I do not believe he would act justly toward me. But I have greater confidence in you and your friends. See if these terms please you. Tarry this year with me upon these conditions; next season you may take the money along; and I am very sure that Dion will be much obliged to you for obtaining such terms." When I heard this I was greatly vexed; however, I said I would think of it, and give my opinion next day. Thus we parted. When got by myself, I had great perplexity. What first occurred was, supposing Dionysius has no intention of doing any thing he promises, yet if I go away, he himself, and his many emissaries, will persuade Dion, by means of the story he now tells, "That he was willing to do what has been proposed, but I was averse to it, and took no concern about these affairs." Besides this, if he does not consent to send me off, and give orders to some shipmaster, but discovers his unwillingness, would any seaman receive

receive me when I am running away from Dionysius's House? But if I stay one year, I shall have opportunity of sending word to Dion, and informing him of my situation, and what I am doing. If Dionysius performs his promises, I shall not have acted a part entirely ridiculous, for Dion's estate will amount to one hundred talents *: but if matters end as I suspect, then I shall not know what to do with myself. Perhaps, however, it is necessary to labour one year longer, and practically refute Dionysius's artifices.

“ HAVING taken this resolution, I told him next day I had determined to stay. But I beg of you, said I, not to imagine I am Dion's master, but that you and I may write to him immediately to signify our opinion, and ask his consent; in the mean time make no alteration of his affairs.

“ THESE

* About L. 20,000.

“ THESE things were proposed and agreed to, as has been said. Then the ships sailed; and when it was no longer in my power to get away, Dionysius told me, that only a half of the estate ought to be Dion’s, the other half his son’s; and he said he would sell it, and give me half of the money to carry along with me, reserving the other for the boy; because that was the most equitable scheme.

“ I was struck at this speech, and thought it would be needless to say any thing farther: however, I said we ought to wait Dion’s answer to our last, and then send him this new proposal. But Dionysius, in a little time after, very confidently sold the whole estate, in what manner, and to whom he pleased, but never spoke a word of these things to me; neither did I again speak to him of Dion’s affairs, for I thought it would be to no purpose. These were my adventures hitherto, while I was serving philosophy and my friends. Hence-
forth

forth I lived with Dionysius like a bird in confinement, watching when it may fly away, while he was contriving how to divert me from it, and yet restore none of Dion's estate. Nevertheless it was told all over Sicily, that we were intimate friends.

“ AT this time Dionysius attempted to reduce the pay of his veteran mercenaries, contrary to his father's custom. The soldiers, being incensed, said they would not allow of it, and he, thinking to force them, shut the gates of the castle; but they immediately marched to attack the walls, roaring some barbarous warlike hymn; at which Dionysius being affrighted, he granted all their demands, and some more.

“ IMMEDIATELY a report was spread abroad, that Heraclides had been the cause of these disturbances; upon which Heraclides fled, and Dionysius sought to catch him, and being at a loss what to do, he sent for Theodorus into the garden, where I at

G

that

that time happened to be walking. I did not hear what other things were said, only what past in my presence I know and remember. Plato, said he, I am endeavouring to persuade Dionysius, that if I can bring Heraclides to speak with us, and answer the accusations against him, if then it does not seem proper that he should stay in Sicily, I propose that he shall take his wife and son and sail to Peloponnesus, and enjoy his estate there, while he does no injury to Dionysius. I have sent for him already, and shall now send for him; if therefore he answers my first or second call, I beseech and intreat Dionysius, if any one meets Heraclides, either in the fields or here, that no other harm be done to him than to be sent out of the country, until Dionysius takes another resolution. Do you grant me this? (said he to Dionysius.) I grant, replied he, that even though he appear before your door, he shall suffer no harm beyond what has been agreed on. Next evening Euribius and Theodotus came

to

to me in great haste and confusion. Theodotus says, Plato *You were present yesterday at the agreement which Dionysius made with you and me concerning Heraclides.* To be sure I was. *Notwithstanding of that,* said he, *the soldiers are now running about in quest of him, and he is probably not far off.* But come along with us to Dionysius as fast as you can. We went therefore and got in to him. They two stood by silently weeping, and I said, These men are afraid, lest you should do any thing to Heraclides contrary to what was agreed upon yesterday, for it seems to be known that he is returned. When Dionysius heard this he was inflamed, and changed colour like one in a fury. Theodotus fell down before him, took him by the hand, weeping and intreating him not to do any such thing. I answered in a soothing way, take courage Theodotus, for Dionysius will not offer to do any thing contrary to his agreement yesterday. Then he looked at me with a very tyrannical aspect, and said, To you I promised neither one thing nor another.

I replied, By all the Gods you gave your promise concerning these very things which he is now begging of you not to do them. Having spoke thus, I turned about and went off. After this the hunt for Heraclides continued; but Theodotus sent him word, and they say he narrowly escaped into the Carthaginian territories.

“ By this accident, Dionysius’s intention of keeping Dion’s money was now covered with a specious pretext of resentment against me. In the first place he sent me out of the castle, pretending that the women were to hold a sacrifice ten days in the garden where I staid. During that time he bid me lodge with Archidemus. While I was there Theodotus sent for me, and said a great deal, with indignation, at what had happened, and blamed Dionysius. But he hearing that I had gone to Theodotus’s house, makes this a new occasion for differing with me, of a-kin to the former. He sent a messenger and asked if
I had

I had been with Theodotus? I said I had. To which he returned, You do not well in preferring Dion and his friends always to me; and sent for me no more to his house, as being manifestly a friend to Theodotus, and even to Heraclides his enemy. Besides, he did not believe me his friend, because Dion's estate was entirely ruined.

“ AFTER this I lived out of the castle, and several people came to me; particularly some servants from Athens, my countrymen, who told me I had been slandered among the soldiers, and that some of them had threatned to kill me, if they met me any where. I therefore thought of this method to save myself; I sent to Archytas and my other friends at Tarentum, telling them what situation I was in. Then they contrived some pretence of an embassy from their state, and sent a vessel with thirty oars, and Lamiscus, one of their number, who, when he came, interceeded with Dionysius for me, telling him I wanted to go away,

away, and that I had no other design. Upon which he consented to send me off, and gave wherewithal to bear my expences. But he neither gave any of Dion's money, nor did I ask it.

“HAVING arrived at Peloponnesus, I met with Dion who was come to see the olympic games. I told him what had happened. Then, calling Jove to witness, he instantly said he would prepare to avenge me and all my friends on Dionysius, for deceiving us his guests, and avenge himself for unjust banishment. When I heard this, I bid him assemble his friends if they had amind to it. As for me, I said, you and the rest have somehow forced me to be a sharer with Dionysius at his table, at his hearth, and in sacred things, who though, from the flanders of many, he probably thought I was plotting with you against him and his government, yet he did not kill, but respected me. Beside, I am too old to be of any use in war. I am common

mon to you both, if at any time ye stand in need of friendship, and want to do one another good offices; but while ye have designs of mutual enmity, ye must seek other friends than me. This answer I gave in the bitterness of regret for my wanderings and misfortunes in Sicily.” *Thus far from Plato.*

It seemed proper to quote his own words at length, as the best account of these adventures, because they have been often misrepresented both in ancient and modern times, and because we shall have occasion for referring to them in the sequel.

BECAUSE this voyage of Plato’s produced no material change of affairs, it seems to be considered as a less important undertaking than it really was, for he intended to reconcile two princes in whose quarrel afterward much blood was shed, and one of them lost his life. He also had a fair prospect of establishing the liberties of Syracuse.

cuse through the peaceful influence of philosophy, which Timoleon afterwards accomplished with so much glory by the sword. We naturally read with admiration the history of warlike heroes who have conquered gloriously, or fallen in battle fighting for their country; yet there may be virtues of a less shining quality, which are equally beneficial to mankind. Had Plato been able to inspire Dionysius with the love of true honour and virtue, *that* would have effectuated all other good things: he was unsuccessful, but this cannot lessen the merit of his attempt.

HENCEFORTH we are not to expect any material action or adventure in the history of Plato. A number of particular anecdotes might be mentioned did they seem of consequence. It has been justly observed, *that the life of a philosopher is, properly, to be read in his works.* Plato seems to have returned from his first travels, about a year or two after the peace of Antalcidas.

Antalcidas. The Athenians had got their wall rebuilt by Canon before this time: they were beginning again to have considerable weight in the affairs of Greece; and, so far as concerned what may be called *foreign politics*, their affairs seem to have been conducted with a great deal of prudence and integrity. The memory of their former sufferings was still fresh; their power was not half of what once it had been, and they were in danger from ambitious neighbours: wherefore they attentively endeavoured to maintain the balance of power, first assisting the Thebans to recover their liberty, and at last powerfully supporting the Lacedemonians against those Thebans themselves, when they were become formidable to the liberties of Greece.

It was not the conduct of Athens, with regard to public interests, that Plato wanted to reform, but the internal constitution of the state, for which no favourable opportunity ever offered. Any reformation

H

of

of this nature is seldom practicable, excepting after some calamity, when people feel their mistakes, and are more cordially inclined to amend them. Thus it happened at Athens when the supreme power was lodged in the hands of thirty. But the remedy proved worse than the disease; so that they relapsed into their former constitution with all its faults.

THE Athenian form of government, being a pure Democracy, was imperfect, and many abuses crept in through length of time. The people were become excessively ready to be agitated by factious orators; great fortune and merit was continually exposed to danger; in so much that we find the poor man in Xenophon's banquet boasting of his poverty, being now not only below the rage of the Demagogues, but even dreaded and courted by the rich.

IN time of the Persian war the people were quiet and tractable, but afterward, by degrees,

degrees, they became unruly ; and, toward the end of the Peloponnesian war, brought on their own destruction, by condemning five of their best generals unjustly to death ; so that few remained who were capable of serving the state.

IN the war for preserving the balance of power between the Lacedemonians and Thebans, the Athenians employed their best men: but after the battle of Mantinea, where Epaminondas fell, the spirit of activity and generous emulation seems to have fallen through all Greece. Then the Athenians, having no immediate dread of a foreign enemy, became more remiss in their discipline at home, and presumptuous men intrigued themselves into the administration, while there seemed to be little danger. The chief merit of such persons consisted in flattering the Athenians, and gratifying their capricious humours. Their success contributed still to increase the number of pretenders to politics, and abilities for the

public service, and of selfish factious men who multiplied the disorders of the state.

HERE it may be worth while to observe, that the Athenians have been unjustly censured by a late ingenious author, in one of his political discourses *, for being too ready to concern themselves in the public affairs of Greece; and that this error made them afterwards quite careless how these matters went, and always ready to flatter the victor,

THAT very cause was pleaded before the Athenians themselves, even after their misfortune at Chæronea, and the accuser banished by a majority of votes more than two to one. If we look into their history, we shall find that the Athenians never abandoned all attention to foreign affairs, nor gave over the generous contest while they had any force remaining. It is true, when overpowered, they were profuse enough in flatter-

* Viz. Of the balance of power.

flattering their master, but with the first opportunity they resumed their indignation at slavery. After the death of Alexander, we find they made a brave attempt for the liberties of Greece, under the conduct of Leosthenes, and if the other confederates had kept the field with the Athenians and Thessalians, there is no small probability that they would have succeeded, having been victorious in two great battles.

BESIDE many struggles of lesser note, we find the Athenians in alliance with Mithridates, deeply engaged against the Romans, suffering famine in a long siege, and all the calamities that could be expected from such barbarous people when they took a city by storm.

THE error of the Athenian government does not appear to have been, in concerning themselves too much for the liberties of Greece, that is to say, *for the balance of power*. But the error lay in their domestic

stic administration, which rendered those generous designs ineffectual, and brought on, indeed, too great indifference for the public interest in critical situations; *not from a national sense of mistakes in their former scheme of politics*, but from their own avarice and love of pleasure, so that when any effort was made, it was either feeble and ineffectual, or the attempt miscarried, because the conduct of it was intrusted into bad hands. May we not with regret observe what difficulties Demosthenes, with all his eloquence, had to rouse the Athenians to action, and open their eyes to Philip's ambitious designs? Of this he frequently complains in his orations; and had they been persuaded to act with vigour in due time, there is reason to believe that their affairs would not have ended so unfortunately. But they were torn and distressed by opposite factions, and degeneracy of manners.

IT

It must be confessed there were some in Athens who objected against the Athenians for taking the alarm at Philip, or concerning themselves with the affairs of Greece. But who were they? Wretches who had pensions from Philip to betray their country; who, when any disaster befel their country, or its allies, used, as Demosthenes tells us, to look joyful, and congratulate one another upon the prosperity of the Macedonians.

SUCH, in those times, was the corruption of the Athenian government, that the money which should have been employed for equipping their fleets and armies, was appropriated, by a public decree of the state, to maintain players, to furnish the expences of the scenery, and pay for seats in the theatre. It also happened, when they sent out an army in defence of their allies, that those allies durst not admit them within their walls for fear of being plundered; owing to the injustice and rapacity of their general:

general: yet that general was not punished. In the mean time they were persecuting and banishing some of their best men.

THERE seem to have been some brave and worthy men at Athens, much abler to conduct an army than either of the two who commanded at Chæronea, but they were not employed. It may be observed upon the whole, that the politics of any state are always more blameless in what concerns foreign than domestic affairs; and frequently good plans of a public nature have miscarried through some error in the internal constitution of government, or the treachery and intrigues of faction.

IN such a situation of affairs, as has been represented, it was wise and just in Plato to retire from public life, because he could employ himself in labours that were useful to his country and all mankind, but could not be so useful any other way. Once indeed he attempted to speak before the people,

ple, in defence of his beloved master Socrates, but they would not hear him because he was too young. In his old age he appeared at the tribunal with his disciple the famous general Chabrias, when no body else had courage to appear. At that time the sycophants threatened him with the fate of Socrates.

YET notwithstanding of Plato's retirement, the cause of virtue and liberty did not lose by it, but rather was collecting force. His instructions were daily animating young people with the love of virtue and their country. The merit of Chabrias was improved by Plato's lessons, and the same is true of Phocion the good and just. From those instructions came forth Demosthenes; from thence he thundered * with that sublime eloquence which was supported and animated by the essential principles of all true genius and oratory, a virtuous life, and the supreme love of liberty and his country.

I

IF

* For proof of this see Geddes's Tracts.

66 ACCOUNT of the, &c.

IF his generous attempts were not crowned with success, the master and scholar are not the less to be applauded. The fates of empires are in the hands of God, and, for his own wise purposes, he turneth them whithersoever he will. Nevertheless the Athenians, after all their misfortunes in arms, continued to enjoy the first place in fame for arts and learning, and came to be much favoured by the Romans on that account, and owed many important privileges to the merits of the Platonic school.

REMARKS,

R E M A R K S,
A N D
A N S W E R S
T O T H E
O B J E C T I O N S.

LET us now proceed to some general remarks, and answer some of the principal objections against Plato, and endeavour to judge impartially according to the standard of truth and nature, which is uniform and consistent with itself in all ages, independent of prevailing fancies or tastes at any particular time.

PLATO has been called a mystical writer, on account of a few passages that cannot be understood clearly. But it may be answered,

in the first place, That some of the greatest difficulties occur in those dialogues where he is representing the metaphysical reasoning, or sublime speculations of other philosophers, such as Parmenides and Timæus. We are certain, that he did not entirely adopt their opinions.

HE sometimes also delivers his sentiments in allegory, not from any affectation to be obscure, but to preserve the same poetical dignity through his work, and avoid a long unnecessary digression; wherefore he sometimes professedly tragedizes in an ironical strain. Of this the allegory in his republic, Book VIII. concerning proper marriages, is a manifest instance.

BESIDES, we have seen in his letter, above quoted, that he did not explain himself completely on certain subjects, because he would avoid the litigious contradictions of ignorant people, and persecution from bigots. If arguments of the following kind and stile can be

be of any force in this present age, they ought to be still more convincing when referred to the age of Plato. “Men of shallow
 “ understandings, circumscribed knowledge,
 “ and who are unacquainted with the arts
 “ of writing, will be puzzled and perplexed
 “ in their endeavours at perspicuity; but be
 “ assured, that an author, who has parts,
 “ learning, and strong sense, if he is ever
 “ dark he is dark by design; tells stories
 “ because he dares not relate facts; gives
 “ you a dream because he cannot give you
 “ a description; and represents in an allegory
 “ what the circumstances of the times will
 “ not allow him to represent any other way.”

THE more that one considers human nature the more he will be convinced that knowledge ought to be communicated only gradually to the mind. We seldom are able immediately to perceive the mutual relations and dependencies of things when the whole is communicated at once: it requires time and patience to review every circumstance
 before

before we can arrive at true knowledge. The want of this occasions innumerable disputes. It is surprising to observe how much the prejudices and various passions of men influence and pervert their judgment. Hence the best philosophers have been of opinion, that the human mind needs greatly to be purified and prepared for the reception of truth. For this reason they did not unfold all their sentiments till people were fit to receive them. Pythagoras enjoined long silence on his scholars; Plato did not speak directly on certain subjects; even our SAVIOUR often spoke in parables, that he only who had ears to hear might be instructed.

To these considerations it may be added, that a great part of the mysteries ascribed to Plato are the mysteries of his commentators only. The obscure passages in our author are extremely few, and it were better to leave them so than perplex and disfigure his philosophy with random speculations, especially where these are not expressly delivered

as

as conjectures. Any one who is tolerably acquainted with learning and antiquity, will find Plato himself more intelligible upon the whole than his commentators; and will agree with those who affirm, that nothing can be more elegant and perspicuous than the general strain of his works.

I might take occasion here to give an account of the commentators on Plato, if it did not require too much time and labour. Dacier mentions five ancient ones, *viz.* Maximus Tyrius under the Emperor Marcus Aurelius in the second century; Plotinus in the third; Porphyrius the scholar of Plotinus, and Jamblichus the scholar of Porphyrius in the fourth; and Proclus in the sixth. Dacier remarks, that though these deserve to be read as ingenious writers, yet they contribute but little towards explaining Plato. This is generally allowed to be true; neither indeed is it at all surprising, if we consider that learning, and all the fine arts among the ancients were at their height about the time when

when Plato wrote. From thenceforth they gradually decayed. The Macedonian conquests destroyed the independency of Greece, the happy *otium* of philosophers, and the incitements of mutual emulation. Wars and revolutions succeeded close one after another, till Rome got the empire of the world. Then the Athenians enjoyed some leisure and protection to cultivate learning; but still this never could give scope and encouragement to the genius equal to the joy and vigor of mind that arises from the consciousness of freedom. The Romans were late of acquiring a taste for literature; and though some great geniuses appeared about the time of the civil wars, when Cæsar enslaved his country, and continued to shine for a little after, yet these were soon extinguished, and the violence of despotic power quickly made it dangerous for one to have merit. Sometimes a few men of worth appear in distant periods, like ships here and there after a storm. These we see lamenting the degeneracy of their times, and the decay of learning;

ing; and some of them also suffering the greatest distresses of poverty, as was the case of Plotinus, notwithstanding his extraordinary merit. The true philosophy of the ancient Pythagoreans, concerning the system of the heavens, seems to have been unknown to those later Platonists. Liberty was lost; learning and all the fine arts were decayed; so that though those writers abound in acute ingenious criticisms and speculations, they were, upon the whole, unavoidably unequal to the task of explaining Plato. I do not however pretend to characterize them exactly.

OF later times there are Marsilius Ficinus, and Serranus; the first of these is allowed to be by far the most learned and best commentator, only that he runs too much upon allegory, owing I suppose to his great deference for those ancients commentators above mentioned. It must however be adverted to, that as all poetry is enigmatical, and as the most part of Plato's works are a sort of sublime poems, we are not to understand

K

every

every passage in too literal and confined a sense.

THOSE allegories of the ancients, which can be explained only from the principles of natural philosophy or metaphysics, are uncertain, both on account of the subject itself, and also perhaps from the design of the author, who durst not make his meaning obvious. But those allegories which have a moral explication are rarely mistaken, and they leave a stronger impression than the same truths would do when delivered in the direct way of precept or maxim. Of this there are instances innumerable both among orators and poets. This much, 'tis hoped, may suffice at present concerning Plato's mysteries: we shall therefore proceed to an observation of a different kind.

THE first philosophers among the Greeks, struck with the love of truth and nature, sought after knowledge with generous ardor, disregarding their own private interest: but
in

in the days of Socrates and Plato matters had begun to take a different turn. The Sophists had arisen, who above all things were attentive to the business of making money; and who having got some reputation were like to pervert the taste of that age from true learning and philosophy. Socrates opposed himself against these men with great vigor and success; but their partisans gave it out, that he was corrupting the youth, and in an unsettled time of the republic he lost his life. Plato resumed the same cause; he committed the philosophy of Socrates to writing; with great acuteness and perspicuity he exposed the ignorance of those Sophists; their quibbling evasive manner; their affectation of universal knowledge; their selfish, immoral, and false maxims of life; their false notions of government, and of the Deity. These writings propagated through Greece, almost finished what Socrates had begun, and brought the Sophists into just contempt. No wonder then that we find they were industrious to propagate slanders against him,

slander being the common resource of a bad cause.

BUT these contentions with the Sophists produced effects of a different kind. Socrates, in his disputes with them, often doubted ironically, and pretended not to know, while on the other hand they pretended to know all things. The later philosophers of the academic school, who succeeded Plato, deviated from their master's intention, and made this doubtfulness a serious principle of their philosophy, asserting, that we may indeed arrive at probability sufficient to determine us to action, but never at absolute truth. Though this principle is better than the unlimited confidence of those who decide upon every thing without distinction, or the perplexity of the sceptics who deny that we can obtain even *a probability* by our inquiries; yet even this in strict philosophy is erroneous, and the consequences of it are hurtful. For the mind readily grasps at any scheme that flatters its indolence; even ignorance by this means

means furnishes us with spiritual pride, and people gladly turn aside into the flowery roads of romance, or loose indigested essays and speculations, until all true learning is extinguished. Lord Bacon, the great restorer of philosophy, has well discerned and described these things long ago. Nov. Organ. Aphor. 67. "Tamen postquam animus de veritate
 " invenienda semel desperaverit, omnino
 " omnia fiunt languidiora; ex quo fit ut
 " homines potius ad amœnas disputationes
 " et discursus, et rerum quasdam peragrationes,
 " quam in severitate inquisitionis se sustine-
 " ant. Verum quod a principio diximus et
 " perpetuo agimus, sensui et intellectui hu-
 " mano, eorumque infirmitati, auctoritas
 " non est detrahenda, sed auxilia præbenda."

IN pure mathematical speculations, where there are material images to assist our ideas, and where the passions are not interested, people seldom mistake, and are easily set right. But in moral or political inquiries, the ideas are more complex and difficult

to

to distinguish, at the same time a multitude of tumultuous passions are perpetually leading the mind astray. It is not therefore so frequently owing to the nature of things themselves that mankind wander from the truth, as to their own preposterous method of inquiry. One may venture to affirm, that the tendency of Plato's writings is, as much as possible, to prevent these misfortunes; to depress pride; to inspire sobriety and moderation of sentiments; and conquer the love of paradoxes and vain glory by the love of truth. This tendency of those dialogues would alone be sufficient to recommend their merit; but it also happens, that they are extremely proper to oppose against the sceptical ungenerous philosophy that is attempted to be revived in this present age; for there is a surprising resemblance between many of the opinions of the ancient sophists and our modern sceptical philosophers; whether it be that they have borrowed from their predecessors, or that the errors of the human mind are similar in all ages.

THERE

THERE have been frequent disputes among learned men concerning the characters of Plato and Aristotle, *viz.* which of the two has the greater merit: but it does not seem of importance to philosophy that this question be exactly determined. I shall briefly mention what occurs, independent of any authority or former disputes, which they who are at leisure may consult.

IN morals, in the fundamental principles of true politics, in sound reasoning, just criticism, and elegant composition, Plato may be reckoned the great original. Aristotle followed the same plan, with some variations and improvements; so that his writings are of use for illustrating Plato: and one will acquire great knowledge of morals and good politics by an acquaintance with them. Aristotle cannot however appear with justice but in the second place upon comparison with his master. He was Plato's scholar for almost twenty years, so that he could not fail to be acquainted with his philosophy,
and

and to reap advantage from many things delivered in Plato's lectures, beside those which manifestly appear in his works. Mr. Geddes has shown, that two books of Aristotle's admired piece, *De Oratore*, are taken from Plato's criticisms at the end of the *Phædrus*. Many other instances of this kind might be given was it worth while in a case so obvious, that any one who is acquainted with Plato may easily trace the same sentiments almost every where in his disciple. Any difference that appears is but trifling, and often seems to be affected *.

ARISTOTLE'S philosophy is therefore nothing else but the Platonic, delivered in a different form with some criticisms and refinements. Thus it naturally happens in sciences and arts, when they are supposed to have arrived near perfection, the critic comes and perhaps makes refinements, and forms rules for conducting others in the same road.

There

* I find that this will be more fully proved and illustrated by Mr. Sydenham, if the public continues to encourage him to proceed with his elegant translation of Plato.

There is indeed a superior kind of criticism by which a great genius sees through the consequences and connections of things, and strikes out new roads that were unknown before; such was the character of Lord Bacon. But this may be called more properly *The genius of invention*. To such kind of praise Aristotle has but small claim; on the contrary, his metaphysical distinctions and obscure terms in natural philosophy have contributed to mislead and deceive the inquisitive mind, and obstruct the progress of knowledge for many ages.

ARISTOTLE's syllogism is useful to prove a truth already discovered; Plato's analysis and induction is more proper to discover a truth unknown. Aristotle is a cool and judicious reasoner; Plato no less accurate, but much more animated and lively. In most part of Plato's compositions there is a certain dignity and force that strikes and carries one along; yet that sublime seems naturally to rise out of the subject, and flows

L

with

with simplicity and ease. In most writers who attempt the sublime you may easily see what labour and toil it costs them.

It must be owned, that Plato has sometimes transgressed in the use of metaphors; but instances of this kind are very few, and of little consequence. For these however we may accept the apology that has been offered by Longinus to this purpose. *When people are attentive to grand objects, small circumstances readily escape them. It is necessary to risque something in order to arrive at the sublime. By an anxious caution one may avoid small errors, but with that timorous spirit it is impossible to rise above mediocrity.*

It has been objected by some, that Plato's writings are loose and inaccurate; but I presume this can be objected only by those who never read him with proper care. According to the different intention of the dialogue, whether embarrassing, confuting, inquiring, or demonstrating, &c. its air and appearance

ance must be different. Many of his dialogues may be justly deemed specimens of demonstration in morals; and though perhaps there may be instances where his demonstrations are not so convincing, it may be justly doubted whether in those instances the subject will admit of better arguments *a priori*. If they can, I most heartily wish that any one would produce them.

DEMONSTRATIONS in morals or politics, must, from the nature of things, be extremely prolix, on account of the complication of ideas and various associations of them that must be disintangled, besides the prejudices and passions of men, who, generally, are averse to be convinced. Dialogue seems the properest form in which arguments on these subjects can be conveyed, because it possesses the easy air of conversation, and has the advantage of enabling one to examine every circumstance with accuracy, and answering difficulties and objections as they may be supposed naturally to

arise in the human mind. Thus it happens in Plato's dialogues; the speakers profess themselves to be at leisure not only to consider and examine every direct argument, but also every illustration and example that may contribute to make the subject better understood.

WE may farther observe, that this method is excellently adapted for representing both sides of an argument, without being obliged to decide, which in many cases cannot easily be done. But because superficial minds are ready to grasp at any shadow of authority that may seem to justify their quibbling and evasions, as if truth and reason were not the most sacred things about which the human mind can be employed, let us carefully remember that Plato's representation of both sides of an argument is never done with the spirit of scepticism to perplex truth, or from a carelessness to find it out. On the contrary, many prevailing errors are refuted in the course of his disputation, and if the whole matter in question

tion is not always fully determined, yet it is always put in a fairer way of being determined afterward.

BESIDES this, the dialogues of Plato, according to Lord Shaftsbury's expressive stile, are a kind of *mirror-writing*. In them you may discern the errors of your own mind, and when it is most liable to wander from the truth. You see the genuine method of investigating truth, and the consequence of setting out upon wrong principles. For this purpose there are various characters drawn in the most lively manner, insomuch that you would think you saw the persons before you, and heard them dispute. You see some extremely conceited, and fond of shewing their abilities, but weighed in the balance of reason, and found wanting. You see others impatient, and positive that they are in the right, but convinced at last that they were mistaken. You have also the example of Socrates, who proceeded calmly in his investigation, never pretending to decide
any

any thing before-hand, but following cautiously and deliberately where reason and argument lead him. "It was not enough, says *the beautiful advice to an author*, that these pieces treated fundamentally of morals, and in consequence pointed out real characters and manners: they exhibited them alive, and set the countenances and complexions of men plainly in view. And by this means they not only taught us *to know others*, but, what was of principal and highest virtue in them, they taught us *to know ourselves*.

"THE philosophical hero of *these poems*, whose name they carried both in their body and front, and whose genius and manner they were made to represent, was in himself *a perfect character*; yet, in some respects, so veiled and in a cloud, that, to the inattentive surveyor, he seemed often to be different from what he really was; and this chiefly by reason of a certain refined raillery which belonged to his manner, and by virtue of which he could treat the highest subjects

subjects, and those of the commonest capacity both together, and render them explanatory of each other. So that in this genius of writing there appeared both the *heroic* and the *simple*, the *tragic* and the *comic* vein. However, it was so ordered, that notwithstanding the oddness or mysteriousness of the principal character, the *under-parts* or *second characters* shewed human nature more distinctly and to the life. We might here, therefore, as in a *looking-glass*, discover ourselves, and see our minutest features nicely delineated, and suited to our own apprehension and cognizance. No one, who was ever so little a while an inspector, could fail of becoming acquainted with his own heart. And, what was of singular note in these magical glasses, it would happen, that, by constant and long inspection, the parties accustomed to the practice would acquire a peculiar *speculative habit*, so as virtually to carry about with them a kind of pocket-mirror, always ready and in use. In this there were two faces that would naturally present themselves

selves to our view; one of them like the *commanding genius*, the leader and chief above-mentioned; the other like that *rude, undisciplined and headstrong creature*, whom we ourselves, in our natural capacity, most exactly resembled," &c.

It would detain us too long to take notice of those among the moderns who have attempted this kind of writing, though we cannot in justice pass without testifying our great esteem of Mr. Harris's accurate dialogues. One great beauty of ancient dialogue was its being a picture of real life; but modern manners, as has been observed by Lord Shaftsbury, cannot be seriously intermingled with a philosophical discourse. Modern dialogue must therefore be unavoidably defective in the life and action, the painting and the scenery, as one may say, which add so great a beauty to the works of Plato.

It has been generally believed that there was a misunderstanding between Socrates's

two

two favourite disciples Plato and Xenophon; but if there was any ground for this, it seems to have been only a generous emulation, which was consistent with personal esteem. There are some letters against Plato in Xenophon's name, but it is doubtful whether they are genuine: and indeed we may reasonably believe them to be spurious, they are so unlike the known character of Xenophon as a fine gentleman. We may rather believe them to be the forgeries of the sophists. Nor is there any need to defend one of these great men at the others expence, as Dacier has attempted to do, by blaming Xenophon. In their genuine works the evidence favours this supposition. We find Xenophon expressly saying, in his *memorabilia*, that Socrates had a particular concern for Glauco, *because he was Plato's brother*.

ON the other hand, it is alledged by Diogenes Laertius, that Plato makes some objections against Xenophon's *Cyropædeia*; but, as I imagine, unjustly. In his second book

M

of

of laws the Athenian speaker says, " My opinion concerning Cyrus is, that he was a good general and a lover of his country, but that he did not so much as think upon the business of education, nor apply his mind to the management of his family. *Cretan.* Why should we say so? *Ath.* He appears to have been employed in military operations from his youth, intrusting the education of his children to the women. Again, the women educated those boys as if their birth alone had been enough to make them happy, and as if they had stood in need of nothing else. In consequence of this false notion they allowed nobody to contradict the young princes in any thing, but on the contrary obliged every one to praise whatever they either said or did; and in this manner they brought them up. *Cretan.* You seem to describe a very comical sort of education. *Ath.* A female one indeed; for the boys were educated by the court-ladies, who had become suddenly rich, the men being from home, and having no leisure on account of many wars and
and

and dangers. *Cretan.* This is probable.

Ath. Their father in the mean time was acquiring for them many flocks of sheep, and herds of cattle, and of men, but he forgot that they to whom he was to leave these possessions had not learned their father's trade; which also was the trade of the Persians; for the Persians were shepherds, and their manner of life a hardy one, very proper for making those boys accomplished shepherds, capable of watching at the gates, or sleeping abroad in the fields, or conducting an army when there was occasion. But Cyrus did not consider that his sons were educated by the women and eunuchs in the corrupted manners of the Medes, on account of the sudden affluence of fortune which we have already mentioned. Hence they became such as it is natural to expect they should be, &c." Are not the misfortunes which befel the Persian empire from the bad education of their princes very evident? And may not Plato be allowed to represent those misfortunes, without supposing that he in-

tended to reflect on Xenophon? On the other hand, while Plato commends Cyrus for his vigilance, for his humanity and affability to his officers; while he also celebrates the ancient Persian manner of life, does he not seem to give us almost an abridgement of Xenophon's book? Is it not therefore highly probable that he intended a compliment? if we may use that word: for in those times of greater simplicity and dignity of manners authors used to be sparing on this head, and never made any fracas in mentioning their *very ingenious and learned friends*, as we moderns do every day for trifles.

LAERTIUS also unjustly supposes there was a misunderstanding between Æschines the philosopher and Plato. His reason for alledging it is, that Plato has mentioned Æschines's name only twice; but he should have added, that these were two occasions the most honourable for Æschines that Plato possibly could have chosen, namely his being present with Socrates at his trial and at his

his death. Laertius adds, it was reported that while Plato was in credit with Dionysius, Æschines came to Sicily and Plato neglected him, but that Aristippus introduced him to the prince. But Plutarch contradicts this story; for he tells us, that Æschines was going away from Sicily without having seen Dionysius when Plato fell upon an ingenious artifice of impressing that prince strongly with a sense of Æschines's worth, and how much it was his duty to take notice of him. In consequence of which Dionysius sent for that philosopher, and treated him with great kindness.

LET us now proceed to consider some objections that have been made against the books of a republic and laws. There are indeed some things in the plan of his republic that are liable to censure; but where was there ever a perfect plan? Let us also remember, that most part of those errors lay in circumstances only where improper or insufficient means have been proposed for obtaining

taining ends that were wise and just. Besides this, in his system of laws he has altered the most exceptionable part of his regulations.

THE general plan of the republic and the laws has been condemned as impracticable and out of nature. To this it is answered, That they were by no means intended as a perfect model for real life: and that they were, what he himself expressly calls them, *A fiction* only, and as it were *a dream*. One great design of his republic is to prove virtue to be the *natural good*, and vice the *natural ill* of every creature. In order to illustrate the arguments on this subject, he formed an imaginary plan of a commonwealth, that he might have opportunity of explaining the just principles of government, and showing the pernicious tendency of vice in any state. He shows how near a resemblance the character of a community bears to the characters of individuals; how the different characters in private life in succeeding

ing generations arise from one another by natural transitions; and how the forms of society and of government alter from similar causes. Plato appears to have been much affected with concern for the miseries of mankind, arising from their irregular imperfect forms of government; and he seems attempting a bold scheme, at least in speculation, to find, if possible, a remedy for those evils. We ought not however to blame him severely where his attempts have failed, but rather applaud the goodness of his design. At the same time we ought not to determine hastily and positively that any scheme is impracticable, because it differs widely from those systems of government that we are acquainted with. Circumstances and times are always changing, and the tastes and opinions of mankind. Many essential parts of Plato's scheme were successfully practised at Lacedæmon for several hundred years. There are many things in natural history, which, to people unacquainted with these studies, appear impossible, and which the philosopher
looks

looks upon without surprise. In like manner, when one has been conversant in the history of nations, and the opinions and forms of government which have prevailed at different times and places in the world, he will be tempted to believe, that there are few systems which might not have been established somewhere. And indeed, without going to distant barbarous nations for arguments and examples, we may find matter enough to humble our pride at home, if we consider seriously the many absurdities in politics, in principles, and in fashions, which prevail at this day through the polished kingdoms of Europe, without controul.

A wise legislator and friend to mankind will endeavour, by good laws, to promote the happiness of society, and curb the vices of men, according as the nature of the people and circumstances of the times permit. And the wisdom of a good politician is discovered in adapting his regulations to the times. In those speculative institutions Plato had no-
thing

thing to incumber him with regard to times, opinions, and tempers. He knew well that his schemes were not entirely practicable; nevertheless, supposing people capable of being moulded at pleasure, he prosecuted his imaginary plan as if he had been framing a city and citizens for it out of wax; that, by contemplating things in their most simple and abstract situations, people might judge what was proper for particular circumstances. To this purpose he speaks himself: *De legibus, lib. 3.* “As for these objections, do not, my friends, imagine I am ignorant that they are in some respect true: yet concerning future possibilities, I think that man does best who represents the standard as it ought to be, without being defective either in truth or beauty. Wherever any thing is impracticable he is to avoid that, and not attempt to put it in execution; but whatever parts of this plan are most nearly related to the particular circumstances of affairs, these let him contrive to bring into practice, &c.”

N

THE

THE happiness of a state depends greatly upon right plans of education. Lycurgus attempted to regulate this matter at Sparta by express laws, not only for the boys, but, in some instances, for the girls also. But Plato observes, that these institutions were not well contrived to prevent irregular love. He also esteems Lycurgus's plan defective, because his regulations were not carried far enough with respect to the women. "They
" are more subtle and artful than men on
" account of their weakness, and are there-
" fore worse to govern; so that your legis-
" lator did not meddle with them; and in
" that he did wrong. The want of this
" has been the cause of many misfortunes
" in your affairs; for it is not merely the
" half that is omitted when the women
" are neglected in your regulations; but
" by how much the female nature is less
" susceptible of courage than the male, by
" just so much the neglect is more than
" the half," &c*.

THOUGH

* ARISTOTLE has insisted on this at some length in his account of the Spartan republic.

THOUGH we in Britain may justly boast that we live under one of the best systems of civil government that perhaps ever was established on earth, yet there are many defects in the common methods of education both for boys and girls. These things ought to be the more anxiously considered, because an error of this nature at the foundation soon destroys a state in spite of the best and most equitable constitution. “ Boys, says Plato, are the worst to tame of all wild beasts; the more natural sense they have, while it is not yet regulated and established, they are the more intrigueing and obstinate; and being the worst to tame of all wild beasts, they need to be bound up with many bridles.” *De legibus, lib. 7.*

I shall just venture to observe with respect to the education of girls, that where the young mind is infected with false and romantic notions; where its inconsiderate follies are not checked by proper authority and example; it can be compared to nothing so

much as to a ship without ballast, with all her sails spread, committed to the chance of the winds and the ocean. On the other hand, a mind regularly trained up in virtue and sobriety, and a taste for elegant and useful industry, is naturally attended with serenity, beauty, health and innocence. On her, perhaps, the virtue and happiness of a whole race depends. "Lo, yonder she walketh in maiden-sweetness, with innocence in her heart, and modesty on her check; her hand findeth employment, her foot delighteth not in gadding abroad," &c.*

PLATO banishes all luxurious dances, all highly passionate or unmanly music, all licentious poetry and painting, from his republic; and has been much accused for excluding Homer: but in this he acted consistently with his own plan. Many things may be, strictly speaking, blameable in a poet, and yet they may pass without censure in common political constitutions, where
much

* SEE the oeconomy of human life for the rest of that beautiful description.

much greater irregularities abound; but they are justly to be excluded from any state where we suppose them to be trained up from their youth in perfect sobriety and simplicity of manners. If people are innocent, though rude and unacquainted with life, it will be a misfortune when they exchange their virtue for knowledge. In a luxurious state, where violent passions produce dreadful mischiefs, it is often useful to paint their progress and effects, that others may be deterred from falling into the like evils; but these pictures would be useless or hurtful in a temperate state where no such violences are known. Many ancient fables concerning the Heathen gods may be so explained as to remove Plato's objections, *viz.* by supposing them allegorical accounts of different parts in natural philosophy; but as these explications were not obvious to mankind, we find in fact that those fables hurt the morals of the people. And at any rate these ambiguities of expression ought to be excluded from a state where

where they are supposed to be perfectly sincere, and plain in all their words and actions.

PLATO was not a foe to poetry if it was virtuous and moderate, not tending to inflame the passions, or corrupt the taste and fancy. He proceeds upon the same principles with regard to music, painting, and the public dances, as these have great influence on the manners of a people; and even though a people are corrupted, yet licentious poetry and painting, and music, &c. tend still to corrupt them more. Poetry is wonderfully adapted for influencing young and tender minds, and often leaves impressions that remain through the whole life. How much is it therefore to be regretted that there are so much of our modern poetry and other writings, which instead of being more chaste and virtuous than those of the ancients, or more useful for correcting the follies, and soothing the cares of life, that they are often the reverse in every article, and

and rather tend to corrupt the head and the heart?

I was now preparing to give a short abstract of Plato's dialogues; but a friend suggested, that there were many objections against Plato in Lord Bolinbroke's late works. Having consulted them, I was struck with surprize, and seemed to myself like one who had been rolling Syfiphus's stone, and that it was now tumbled down again upon me to the bottom of the hill. Whatever reason there may be in political disputes, there can be none in philosophic, for yielding to the authority of great names. Violent declamations and bold assertions may sometimes serve a jobb in politics, and gain temporary credit: philosophy appeals to the decision of fair argument. I shall therefore endeavour to shew the injustice of some of the most material objections, believing that this may be enough to satisfy any candid person concerning the whole. It would be a tedious work to examine every one of them, especially

cially seeing there are very few quotations or references given by his Lordship to conduct us. Few people would be willing to follow through a minute inquiry: other avocations are urging us to hasten.

IN his fifth letter on history he says, "Nothing can be truer than that maxim of Solon's, impertinently enough censured by Plato, in one of his wild books of laws, *Affidue addiscens ad senium pervenio.*" *imo*, This censure is not to be found in the books of laws, but in the seventh book of his republic. *2do*, It is of no consequence to inquire whether Plato there opposes the authority of Solon or no, if his principles are just. He insists upon it, and who can deny "that youth is the properest season for learning? that old people are as unfit for hard study as for running races? and that all severe and numerous labours, either of body or mind, are proper for young men only?" This maxim of Solon's occurs again in the dialogue Laches, where its true meaning

ing is found: and a mistaken meaning of it is refuted in the dialogue *de philosophia*, to both which we refer in the following abstract.

VOL. III. p. 356. " It was too presumptuous in Plato to assert that the Divine Being had *need of a plan, like some human architect*, to conduct the great design when he raised the fabrick of the universe." *Ans.* This, I believe, will not be found in Plato. Timæus says, poetically, " That this visible world was made after a celestial and eternal pattern; that, says he, is manifest, seeing the world is beautiful, and the author of it is good. " This world is the most beautiful of all productions, and he the best of all causes." Vol. III. p. 29. Serranus's edition. Again, p. 37. " When therefore the Creator and Father of the universe observed it moving and alive, in resemblance of the immortal gods, he was rejoiced and delighted with his work." &c. But he nowhere says the Deity had need of a plan.

P. 520. When Plato speaks of dæmons, or invisible spiritual natures, he says, "We must take these upon tradition." *Upon such respectable authority did the divine Plato vend to his own and future ages all the mysterious nonsense that Pythagoras and he had imported from the Eastern schools, &c.* *Ans.* It appears plainly that Plato did not believe these stories; but he treats them with decency, because they were opinions established long before his time, which it would not have been safe for him to contradict. His express words are, "We must believe them *in obedience to the law*;" Vol. III. p. 40. In the fifth book of laws he says, "That no man of sense would attempt to alter what had been established by ancient tradition concerning the gods and dæmons." And in the *Epinomis*, "That these are things we know nothing about." Beside all this, we know that the notions of dæmons, and their rank in the Heathen theogony, was established by Hesiod, long before the days either of Plato or Pythagoras; and, which is strange, his Lordship had even said

said so not long before. One can hardly think that these attacks proceed from want of candor: they at least show how great is the power of violent prejudices where people are governed by them. What other cause can we possibly assign for that unfair account which Bolingbroke gives of the life of Pythagoras? wherein scarce any good thing is mentioned of him or his disciples; the meaning of their good actions is perverted, and any reports to Pythagoras's dishonour, however vague and uncertain, are all assumed as truths.

P. 535. "Plato's vague and figurative manner of writing, gave occasion for believing either a material or immaterial soul."

Ans. People may have taken occasion to go wrong; but there is not any thing that appears more manifestly through the whole of Plato's works, than that he believed the soul, or thinking substance, to be immaterial, as will appear by the following answer. Vol. IV. p. 107. "Poor Dacier may not scruple to

“ affirm, and piously believe, that, according to Plato, motion was imprinted on matter by the same spirit who created matter.” *Ans.* Plato, in his tenth book of laws, defines the soul to be *the self-moving substance*. Hence he infers that the soul is the origin and first mover of all things that have been, are, or shall be. He observes also, that atheists use the word *Nature*, improperly; for if mind is elder than air and fire, &c. *mind is the cause of all*. The whole strain of his arguments is to that purpose: “ *Mind is elder than matter, because the mover is superior to that which is moved.*” ’Tis true, that in Timæus God is represented as reducing the discordant motions of matter, like Ovid’s chaos, into order; but that does not exclude the supposition that the same Spirit created matter. Accordingly Plato, in his politician, supposes, that the motions of all material natures, when left to themselves, will run into disorder at last, and need the amending hand of their great Author. So also said Sir Isaac Newton.

SOCRATES

SOCRATES, on that day when he was to die, regreted that Anaxagoras, while he accounted for the phænomena of nature, had not regard enough to final causes.—This observation was in itself strictly just, and at the same time was intended to point out, in a strong but artful manner, the injustice of the Athenians, who had condemned Socrates for impiety. But from thence Bolingbroke alledges, that Socrates would have pretended to explain the works of nature by the moral fitness or unfitness of things; and ascribes a long train of weak reasonings to him, which every one who is acquainted with the character of Socrates will easily see that they are suppositions without any foundation. He says, that “Socrates despised physics and resorted to metaphysics.” The truth is, that “Socrates finding all dark and uncertain in the various systems of his predecessors, was satisfied, that it was better to rest contented with the general view of nature open to all, than adopt any one of them; and having applied himself to

“ promote

“ promote the practice as well as the theory
 “ of moral philosophy amongst his fellow-
 “ citizens by his example and precept, he
 “ merited the highest esteem and admira-
 “ tion of mankind.* ” It may be observed,
 that in the place referred to by Lord Bo-
 lingbroke, Socrates is expressly and anxiously
 avoiding a minute explication of the me-
 chanical causes of things, because he found
 so little success in attempting it ; and there-
 fore he contents himself with assuming a few
 general self-evident principles, not with the
 intent to explain nature from those meta-
 physical principles, but only as sufficient for
 his purpose at that time, to support and illu-
 strate an argument for the immortality of
 the soul, founded on this metaphysical prin-
 ciple, *viz.* “ That it is impossible for two
 contrary qualities to exist together in the
 same subject.”—When Pythagoras and Plato
 inculcate, that the tumult of the passions
 should be quieted, and truth contemplated
 with a pure and unprejudiced mind, nothing
 can

* Account of Sir Isaac Newton's philosophical discoveries, p. 30.

OBJECTIONS, &c. III

can show the importance of that advice more than the perversion of it; for Bolingbroke will have it, that they bid you shut your eyes; abstract from your senses and external objects; rise in contemplation to the real essences and metaphysical principles of things, and see all things in God, &c.

P. 127. "Such were the *ideas* of Plato, "and such is the phantastic science which "perverts the whole order of real science, by "pretending to descend down from scientific and axiomatical knowledge down to "particular knowledge, and from universals to singulars," &c. If Plato had assumed those axioms or general principles in the random way that Bolingbroke alledges, then his objection had been unanswerable. Lord Bacon observes, Nov. Org. Aph. 103. that when a number of particular facts are discovered in natural philosophy, we are not to proceed immediately to seek more facts, at least we are not to rest in that process alone. These, says he, when collected, will,

no

no doubt, promote knowledge and useful arts. *Majora vero speranda sunt a nova luce axiomatum, (ex particularibus illis certa via & regula eductorum) quæ rursus nova particularia indicent & designent.* "Our road, he proceeds, does not lie upon a plain, but upon an ascent and descent; ascending to *axioms*, and descending to operations." As if he had said, "The genuine method of investigation ascends as it were by steps analytically to some general principle, and having arrived at this general principle, many consequences are synthetically deduced from it." That this genuine method was Plato's, Lord Bacon candidly owns, Aphor. 105. *At inductio, quæ ad inventionem & demonstrationem scientiarum & artium erit utilis, naturam separare debet per rejectiones & exclusiones debitas; ac deinde post negativas quot sufficiunt, super affirmativas concludere; quod adhuc factum non est, nec tentatum certe, nisi tantummodo a Platone, qui ad executiendas definitiones & ideas, hac certe forma inductionis aliquatenus utitur.* If indeed one does not know or advert to the first half of
this

this method, he may be very liable to object against the second.

P. 140. "When he sinks from these imaginary heights of enthusiasm and false sublime, he sinks down, and lower no writer can sink, into a tedious Socratical irony; into certain flimsy hypothetical reasonings, that prove nothing," &c.

Ans. General affirmations prove nothing. In the mean time one may reasonably ask, whether it is probable that so many men of eminent learning, taste and genius, in ancient and modern times, have been mistaken in admiring Plato as a fine writer, rather than Lord Bolingbroke who condemns him?

LONGINUS speaking of Homer, Plato, Demosthenes, says, "No age or generation of men has as yet been so far capable of infatuation, through *the madness of envy*, but have yielded up, and presented them with the rewards of victory; which hitherto they have enjoyed without interruption, and probably

bably will enjoy while the world stands." Horace is allowed to have been a man of fine taste and sound sense, yet he mentions the elegance of Plato's writings as an instance of the happy effects of sound philosophy. *Scribendi recte sapere est et principium et fons; hoc tibi Socraticæ poterunt ostendere chartæ.* He makes himself be bantered for not writing often enough, though he gave himself studious airs, by carrying such great companions as Plato, Menander, Eupolis and Archilochus with him to the country. Lord Shaftsbury's opinion has been already quoted, and we may let these suffice; for I can only quote authorities to oppose authority, when unsupported by any proof.

P. 141. He makes ill-natured insinuations against Plato's moral character, and the reasons of his voyages to Sicily, &c. *Ans.* His voyages to Sicily have been clearly accounted for already by a plain narrative of the facts. There have been some foolish verses forged and ascribed to Plato, and some idle stories told,

told, that in the judgment of every unprejudiced person must appear to refute themselves; nevertheless Bolingbroke has raked together at random the most part of those stories and slanders, though they appeared to us so trifling, or so obviously absurd, that it would be a loss of time to refute them. I shall only add, that the friendship of Chabrias, Phocion, Isocrates, Demosthenes, and indeed almost of every good man in that age in which he lived, concur to prove his worth. Aristotle, though jealous enough of his master's fame, yet in his epitaph represents Plato as a person of so much goodness, that a bad man *ought not even to presume to praise him.*

IN many of these objections Bolingbroke avails himself much upon the authority of Lord Bacon; but he does not keep within the same bounds, and is actuated by a different spirit. Lord Bacon planned the genuine method of inquiring into nature, in his *Novum Organum*, and has rejected Aristotle and Plato as insufficient guides in these

matters—justly. What Bacon has objected to Plato, relates to him only as a natural philosopher, not as a moralist, which was his principal character. Mankind are more apt to be led by fashion and authority than by truth; it was therefore necessary that Lord Bacon should demolish those servile regards that had been paid to Aristotle and Plato, before he could establish a better system. But now, when that better system is established, we may still admire the *Timæus* as an inimitably beautiful composition, and the only remaining monument of the ancient Pythagoric philosophy. *Timæus*'s own work is still extant; Plato has but paraphrased it with some embellishments, and translated it from the Italian style into elegant Greek. It is very evident that Plato neither desired nor expected that work to be considered as a standard; on the contrary, it manifestly appears that he was anxiously desirous to guard against such an event: otherwise why should *Timæus* confess, that “at best he can pretend to tell only a probable story?” or
wish

wish that "both the hearer and the speaker
 "may remember they are but men?" or can-
 didly invite any one to give a better account,
 and declare that such a one would not be his
 enemy but his friend? and, as if that were
 not yet enough, when he has done, Timæus
 prays, that he may be corrected if any thing
 has been said amiss; and that his soul may
 receive the best and most perfect of all me-
 dicines, *Knowledge*, to enable him for the
 future to give a just account of the heavenly
 bodies.

THE study of nature will afford employ-
 ment to the inquisitive in all ages. We
 ought not to despise the ingenious, though
 unsuccessful efforts of former times, especial-
 ly seeing we owe so many of our boasted
 modern discoveries to the valuable hints re-
 ceived from them. 'Tis true there are some
 things in the Timæus concerning the soul of
 the world, and other metaphysical doctrines
 of the Pythagoreans, that are obscure; ne-
 vertheless it would be doing injustice to that
 work

work merely to make apologies for it. Its beauty considered as a poem is extraordinary, and it contains many hints that have been improved since that time, and accounts for the phenomena of nature, not by metaphysical principles, as Bolingbroke imagines, but by the laws of mechanism in a manner truly philosophical, as will appear, at least in part, by the following abstract. I cannot help observing, that there is such an air of violence and passion in all Bolingbroke's censures, that it would diminish a good deal of their value even supposing they were just; for the spirit of railing is the reverse of philosophy; and indeed no true philosophy could justify writings of such pernicious tendency as his Lordship's; so destructive of religion and the hopes of a future state. But I shall leave these to be considered by others, and conclude with the authority of one who is confessedly a judge in these matters, namely, the author of the essay on the writings and genius of Mr. Pope.

“ WHEN

OBJECTIONS, &c. 119

“ WHEN Tully attempted poetry, he be-
“ came as ridiculous as Bolingbroke when he
“ attempted philosophy or divinity. We
“ look in vain for that genius which produ-
“ ced the dissertation on parties in the tedi-
“ ous philosophical works, of which it is no
“ exaggerated satire to say, That the reason-
“ ing of them is sophistical and inconclusive,
“ the style diffuse and verbose, and the learn-
“ ing seemingly contained in them not drawn
“ from the originals, but picked up and pur-
“ loined from French critics and translations,
“ and particularly from Bayle, from Rapin,
“ and Thomassin, together with the assist-
“ ance that our Cudworth and Stanley hap-
“ pily afforded a writer confessedly ignorant
“ of the Greek tongue, who yet has the in-
“ sufferable arrogance to vilify and censure,
“ and think he can confute the best writers
“ in that language.”

BUT after all, the most effectual refutation
of these and the like objections would be had
from an acquaintance with Plato's works
themselves.

themselves. At the same time a nobler advantage would be obtained; because it is impossible to read them with any tolerable degree of candor and impartiality, without feeling for truth and the interests of virtue. For this reason I shall now proceed to give a short account of these dialogues; not so compleat indeed, nor so accurate as I could wish, being oppressed with other affairs; but if they can appear useful or important in this cursory view, how much more beautiful must these works themselves be?

End of the second Part.

A
G E N E R A L V I E W
O F
PLATO'S DIALOGUES.

MOST part of these dialogues are mutually connected, and tend to illustrate one another. That was principally considered in the following arrangement, though a strict regard to it did not seem absolutely necessary.

E U T H Y P H R O N.

THIS dialogue teaches us to beware of ascribing to God any thing unworthy of the Divine Nature. Euthyphron was a bigot, who believed all the poetical fables concerning their gods, and who, from his great pretences to sanctity, was going to ac-

Q

cuse

cuse his own father of murder, for this reason. A hired servant of theirs quarrelled with one of the slaves and murdered him. Euthyphron's father seized the fellow, put him in chains, and threw him into a dungeon; then sent to the interpreter of the laws to know what should be done. In the mean time he neglected to take care of the wretch, and he died of cold and hunger. In this accusation Euthyphron pretends that he acted a holy part, and imitated the gods; for Jupiter imprisoned his own father for his injustice, and Saturn again castrated his father for a similar reason. Euthyphron defines holiness to be that which is agreeable to the gods. Socrates observes to him, that according to his own account the gods frequently differed in their opinions of right and wrong, and had frequent seditions and wars among themselves. Then holiness, said he, is, "That which is agreeable to *all* the gods." But Socrates asks, whether the gods loved any thing because it was holy, or if the thing was holy because the gods loved it? After several

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 123

several fruitless attempts to answer this difficulty, Euthyphron puts it off till some other time.

A P O L O G I A.

IN the former dialogue Socrates is supposed to be waiting at the *portico* of the Areopagus till the hour of his trial should come on; and therefore, as a proper sequel, we have his apology, full of that genuine force and evidence which attends truth and justice, and that dignity of mind which became Socrates. There is a greater simplicity in this performance than any of Plato's other pieces. 'Tis probable that he copied Socrates on this occasion more accurately than usual. We may observe, that Socrates was condemned by a majority of three votes only.

C R I T O

COMES to Socrates in prison, and offers to procure his escape, which he refuses; and shows how inconsistent it would be for him now to catch banishment contrary to the law, who at the beginning of his trial

Q 2

had

had refused to accept of banishment with consent of the law. How could he recommend obedience to the laws at Thebes, who himself had broken them at Athens? The revelling Thessalians would not mind him; he could not carry his sons with him to Theffaly, and his friends could take as much care of them when he was removed to the other world as when he was removed to Theffaly. Besides, as he was now past seventy years of age, what remained of life, according to the course of nature, would not be worth so much pains.

P H Æ D O

CONTAINS his discourses on the immortality of the soul, which he made in prison that day when he was to die. This piece is generally known and admired *. These four dialogues are like the different acts of a tragedy; but they are only like them; which, I believe, has deceived some of our critics. All violent emotions of the
mind

* SOME unavoidable accidents prevented the giving an abstract of this dialogue.

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 125

mind were, as much as possible, excluded from Plato's Republic. Tragedy may be called the representation of characters and events of the important and solemn kind. Terror and pity are powerful passions in the human breast, and poets almost without exception, from the time when they contended for a goat by those poems, have applied themselves to move pity and terror. But Plato's views were more enlarged. "We ourselves are tragic poets, says he, *imitators of the best and finest life, which we say is the truest tragedy.*" Plato in these dialogues not only moves our compassion for suffering innocence and worth, but represents for our instruction the steadiness of a good man in the cause of truth, and the happy effects of a well spent life when one comes to die. Plato has clearly defined the precise effect that this dialogue must necessarily have on every unprejudiced reader, such, viz. as it had upon Phædo, who was present at the discourse. "Quamobrem neque admodum commovebar."—"Neque rursus

“rursus afficiebar lætitia.”—“Sed revera
 “affectus quidam mirus, atque insolita vo-
 “luptatis dolorisque permixtio me inva-
 “ferat.”

T H E A G E S

IS a youth desirous of knowledge and improvement, that he may become useful and respectable in the state; but he has no distinct idea what kind of knowledge he stands in need of, and begs of Socrates to be admitted as one of his disciples; for he had seen many youths prodigiously improved by his company. Socrates tells him, that was a very uncertain affair, because the success of any of his scholars depended not on himself, but on their being acceptable to the dæmon that attended him from his youth. Socrates mentions several instances where the dæmon had given him the usual signal, and he had dissuaded some of his scholars, in consequence of it, from proceeding in their intended enterprizes, and they who disobeyed had been unfortunate. These things seem contrived to inspire Theages with patience, modesty,

modesty, and docibility of temper, which a youth of genius and quick parts commonly stands very much in need of, in order to allow himself to be compleatly and regularly instructed *.

DE PHILOSOPHIA.

TWO young men were rivals; one of them was unlearned and the other picqued himself upon his knowledge. Socrates desires him to explain what it was to be a philosopher: and the youth quotes that verse of Solon, *Affidue addiscens ad senium pervenio*. Socrates says, that at first he imagined the young man had spoken something to the purpose, but upon further inquiry found his meaning to be, that a philosopher was one who made it his sole business to learn a variety of things as long as he lived. This opinion Socrates refutes perspicuously. The wisest and best of men in this imperfect state

* IN the Republic, book 6th, we find, that Theages had every quality which might make him abandon philosophy, but was restrained by one strong bridle, his weak constitution, that made him unfit for civil offices.

state of being, will, no doubt, be learning always something every day: but then it would be a very absurd inference from this common-place truth, that to be a philosopher is to be perpetually studying some new art, or trade, or science, and only filling one's head with an incoherent jumble of knowledge incessantly to the end of life. Moderate labour and meat are best for the body, moderate studies and pursuits for the mind. A philosopher is not he who glances at every art without thorough knowledge; for such a one would be useless so long as there were tradesmen in the world who would each excel him in his particular calling: but philosophy is that science which makes men better, and discerns between good and bad. This science is intended for the use of civil society, as well as private persons. Justice being *punishment properly inflicted*, that is, a discernment between good and bad. He who cannot discern between the good and bad amongst mankind cannot know himself seeing he is a man: he who does not know himself

himself cannot be a wise man. Hence the oracle at Delphos recommended the exercise of justice and wisdom. That which makes us understand when to punish aright is justice: to discern both ourselves and others is wisdom; therefore justice and wisdom are the same. This may be extended to societies and princes as well as private persons. By this the duties of each particular station are discerned, &c. Philosophy therefore is not a general smattering in various sciences and arts, but something vastly different.

THE ÆTETUS

IS supposed to be a dialogue written by Euclid, from Socrates's account of his conversation with that youth. The character of Theætetus is amiable. Theodorus the mathematician commends his fine genius; and Socrates, a little before his death, had foretold to Euclid, that that youth would signalize himself when he grew up. Accordingly we find that he was an eminent mathematician for those times; and Euclid had

R

been

been just taking his leave of him when he passed by Megara from the battle of Corinth, where he was much wounded, and where he had behaved with signal bravery, though he was afflicted with a dysentery. Their reflections on this man's worth makes Euclid's friend the more desirous of hearing the dialogue; which a servant reads. In this, as in all his dialogues, it is impossible to describe the beauty of his scenery. It is proposed to enquire into the nature of knowledge; Theætetus calls it *Sensation*, according to Protagoras's notion, who said, That every thing was to every man just what it appeared to him. That, properly speaking, no one thing really is; but what we call existence is only a perpetual flux and mixture of generation and dissolution, &c. Agreeably to this also, whatever any state thinks to be for its interest, is really so; honourable and dishonourable, just and unjust, holy and unholy, are all arbitrary and dependent upon the particular will of different states, and alter their nature whenever the state

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 131

state alters its opinion. Socrates proposes to refute those notions. But it would make them lose sight of their first inquiry concerning knowledge. Then Socrates as it were happens to say, That the character of people bred up from their youth about courts of law, and in managing pleas and contentions between men, compared with the character of one truly instructed in philosophy, differs as much as a slave differs from a free man. To illustrate this assertion he draws their two characters in a very striking manner, to which we must refer. Theodorus says, " If you could persuade every
 " one of what you say, as you have done
 " me, there would be more peace and fewer
 " evils among men." *Socrat.* " It is impossible that evil should be entirely abolished; there is a necessity that good should always meet with opposition, except among the gods: but evils necessarily surround mortal nature, and this world; wherefore we should endeavour to fly thither with all speed. Our flight consists in resembling God as much as possible,

and this resemblance consists in *Knowledge*, *Righteousness* and *Holiness*. It is however no easy matter to persuade the vulgar, that the reasons for which they fly from vice and follow virtue are not good, *viz.* "To avoid an ill reputation and acquire a good one." That, in my opinion, is an old wife's fable. Let us therefore thus assert the truth; "God is not by any means unjust, but as much as it is possible to imagine, most Just; and no one resembles GOD more than he who, to his utmost, is most just. Concerning *this* a man's activity, or his indolence and sloth, are truly known. The knowledge of *this* is true wisdom and virtue, and not to know it glaring ignorance and vice. All other imagined acuteness is oppressive in public government, and in trades and merchandizes is dirty. They who are unjust in words and actions, it were better not to allow them that they are vastly ingenious rogues; for they are proud of the reproach: they imagine people think them no contemptible fellows, and not *the bane of the earth*; but of a character

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 133

racter proper for succeeding and making a fortune in the world," &c. This very accurate and curious dialogue is continued at great length after these reflections, and several false definitions of knowledge are refuted *.

EUTHYDEMUS.

THAT sophist and his brother pretended they could teach virtue, and teach it in a little time: but they began with quibbles. Socrates takes up the discourse, and proves to the youth whom they were pretending to instruct, that all the external blessings of life are in themselves neither good nor bad, but become such according as they are wisely or unwisely used: and at the conclusion begs of the sophists to teach the youth wisdom. Then the eldest sophist begins and amuses him with quirks, which provokes one of the by-standers: the other sophist interposes with new quibbles, which provokes him still more. Socrates takes up
the

* THIS dialogue is supposed to have happened immediately before he met with Euthyphron.

the discourse, because they were like to fall out. The sophist makes a curious quibble on the nature of contradiction, and denies that such a thing is possible. If I, says he, speak according to the nature of the subject, and you do not, then you speak about something else; but if we speak about different things, how can we contradict one another. This was a famous argument of Protagoras's, who said, "That man was the standard of all things to himself." This sophist was of the same opinion; and said, That there could be no ignorance nor error. If so, said Socrates, what in the name of wonder do you come here to teach? Did not you two, a little ago, profess to teach virtue? Oh! replies the sophist, do not tell me what I said perhaps a year ago; that has nothing to do with my argument just now. Socrates however refutes this argument, and proceeds to some moral observations. Then the sophist begins again to quibble, and is led into many absurd and ridiculous assertions. For example, he affirmed that he knew all things
always,

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 135

always, and undertakes to prove that Socrates did so, and makes out his proof by quibbles. That same captious manner is continued in many instances to the end of the dialogue. Socrates silyly observes, That the generality of mankind would have more pleasure in being refuted by these sorts of arguments than in refuting. Then he leaves them. At the end of the dialogue he obviates an objection that had been made against spending one's time in those philosophical disputes. It was the remark of one who was a smatterer in politics and philosophy, one whom Prodicus would have called *an inhabitant of the borders*, who lived upon the confines of both, but was intimately acquainted with neither, and yet pretended to determine on what he did not understand.

PROTAGORAS.

THE introduction and scenery of this dialogue are beautiful, and the affected dignity and solemnity of the sophist finely painted. Protagoras says that he can teach
virtue;

virtue; Socrates doubts if it can be taught.—Protagoras begins with a fable, tending to shew, that justice and sobriety being political virtues, it was necessary that all mankind should have some share of them. He argues, that they are acquirable by labour and study, otherwise there could be no punishments; and observes, that it was no more wonderful to see a good man have a bad son, than to see any man eminent in his art whose son was not comparable.—Socrates asks him, whether wisdom, temperance, justice, fortitude, holiness, were parts of virtue, or separate distinct virtues. He says, they are parts of virtue. Socrates pushes him by questions, and reduces him to difficulties, which he endeavours to evade, by running out into long speeches, which Socrates pretends that he cannot remember.—There is a pretty digression concerning Simonides the poet. Socrates vindicates his meaning, and affirms, “*That indeed it was a difficult matter for any one to become good; but without divine assistance it was impossible for him to continue so.*”—Then
the

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 137

the dispute returns to the former question concerning temperance, fortitude, &c. whether they were different names for the same thing, or each of them had a peculiar substance and nature of its own. These things are inquired into, that they might determine, first, what was virtue; and next, consider if it could be taught.

HIPPIAS *

CONTAINS a dispute concerning the character of Achilles and Ulysses, in which the sophist is perplexed, but the question is not compleatly decided.

C R A T Y L U S,

A LONG and curious dialogue concerning the propriety and signification of words. It contains many curious derivations of names, and shows the relation between the different sets of words in the Greek language, and the

S

systems

* HIPPIAS was a considerable computist, geometrician, astronomer, pretended to be a dithyrambic and tragic poet, &c. he made his own ring, cut and engraved his seal, wove and made his own clothes, plaited his own girdle, made his own shoes, and had a prodigious memory.

systems of philosophy that had prevailed at different times in Greece.

G O R G I A S

PROFESSES himself a teacher of oratory, which introduces the question, "What is oratory?" Gorgias defines it, "The art of persuasion." But it is asked, To what purpose this persuasion should tend? and who are the most proper persons to persuade on particular occurrences. The argument is brought to this point, "*That a true orator never makes a bad use of his eloquence; or, that justice and true oratory are inseparable.*"

THEN Polus takes up the dispute; and Socrates calls rhetoric *a practical skill*, in giving pleasure and entertainment, which, he says, agrees to cookery. Then he calls it *a kind of flattery*; and that rhetoric, cookery, pastry, sophistry, are all branches of the same business.—He observes, that people are imposed upon by appearances; for an orator who can raise money from the state, or banish

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 139

nish or cause slay one at his pleasure, unless he does these things for just reasons, is more unhappy than if he wanted that power. Hence it comes to be disputed, whether a prosperous wicked man may be said to be happy. This is denied by Socrates, who affirms, that his passing unpunished is an aggravation of his misery. In the first place he proves, "That it is a greater evil to injure than to be injured." Secondly, That having done evil, it is better to be punished for it, because just punishments tend to cure the soul of its vice. "Vice is the disease of the soul; punishment tends to correct and cure these mental diseases," &c.

CALLICLES interposes here. If you say these things seriously Socrates, and if they are true, our whole course of life must be inverted; for we act directly opposite to what we should do. But, says Socrates, this is the decision of philosophy. Callicles replies, your arguments are good according to legal, but not by natural justice. By legal justice

it is more dishonourable to injure than to be injured: by natural right it is the contrary. Laws are only artificial constitutions, &c. philosophy is ready to mislead and make one quite ignorant of the arts and ways of life. A small notion of philosophy may do well enough for a young man, but for an old man to philosophize is intolerable. Believe me, Socrates, you push the business of philosophizing too far, and expose yourself to the insults of worthless fellows. Take my advice; lay aside your disputation, study the acuteness of business, and quit those trifles that tend to keep you always a poor man, &c.

—Callicles's notion was, that right is founded in power; hence the poet celebrated Hercules who carried off Geryon's cattle without either giving him a price or getting them in a present.—Again, he says, that restraining of our passions was a slavery and meanness of spirit; and that low-minded people, who wanted sense and abilities to obtain the gratification of their appetites, began to praise temperance and sobriety, &c.

and

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 141

and made laws about them. Then the dispute turns upon a life of pleasure, and a life of temperance. In the first place it is proved, that *pleasure* and *good* are not synonymous terms, nor *pain* and *evil*. From this it is inferred, that some pleasures may be good, some evil. The aim of rhetoric ought to be to make people better. A corrupted state increasing in power is like a body full of diseases, which is the worse the more it is fed. Then he proceeds to shew the excellency of temperance and justice, and how much more one ought to be afraid of *doing an injury than suffering one*.—Oratory need not boast of its merit for having sometimes saved mens lives, navigation often does the same without boasting. You will be transported from Ægina for two Oboloi; and your freight from Egypt, or from Pontus, for yourself, your wife and family, will cost you only two Drachmæ: the shipmaster, after he has performed all this, walks about like any other man, being conscious that he has bettered his passengers neither in body nor in mind.—Pericles corrupted

rupted the manners of the people ; neither did the eloquence of Themistocles or Cimon tend to improve their morals. Harbours, docks, and walls, and revenues, are trifles to a nation without temperance and justice.—Socrates shows, that it would be in vain for him to engage in politics, unless he resolved to comply with the humours of the Athenians ; but that was impossible for any one who was devoted to truth and justice alone.—A physician practising among boys, and cutting and burning them according to the rules of art, would have all the boys to condemn him : just so would Socrates have the Athenians. No good man will accuse me unjustly. A bad man may accuse, and even prevail against me by injustice ; but it is better to suffer undeservedly than stain one's soul with crimes.—These things are not only true in themselves, but they acquire great force also from the consideration of a future state of rewards and punishments.—He repeats again, and inculcates that divine sentiment, “ *That one ought always to be more afraid of doing*

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 143

doing an injury than suffering one." And that the true use of eloquence is to serve the cause of virtue *.

I O

THE rhapsodist was charmed and transported when he sung the verses of Homer, but not so when those of any other poet. He cannot explain how this happened. Socrates tells him that it proceeds from enthusiasm, and compares Homer to the loadstone, by which Io being touched, he acquired a kind of magnetic virtue, and touched and affected others. True poetry, in like manner, proceeds from inspiration, or a sort of divine enthusiasm that cannot be accounted for.

P A R M E N I D E S,

A CURIOUS and abstruse dialogue. This philosopher, in his poems, had said, that the universe was *One*. Zeno, who was his disciple and attendant, had written something to the same purpose. Socrates (who was then a young man, and Parmenides at that

* It is surprising that Cicero mistook the meaning of this dialogue in his book *De Oratore*. Quintilian has judged better.

that time very old) makes some objections, which Parmenides commends; and describes to Socrates the proper method of inquiring after truth. The sequel of the dialogue is an example of that investigatory method.—There were two opposite sects of philosophers in those days; the one was that of Heraclitus, Protagoras, and their disciples, who said, “That every thing was in perpetual flux and motion; that every thing was just what it appeared to be at the present time, and that nothing was certain.”—Plato, in Theætetus, refutes Protagoras’s notion, and professes great admiration of Parmenides. He refers to this very dialogue, which seems to be a genuine and real account of those opinions, perhaps in Parmenides’s words; for Socrates in the Theætetus says, he does not chuse to enter upon the consideration of that question, lest he should mistake or misrepresent Parmenides’s meaning; but especially as the subject was so vastly extensive and important it would lead them entirely away from their present inquiry.

PLATO

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 145

PLATO has entered a little upon this question in the Sophista; he assumes also some part of those principles in the Philebus, and elsewhere. Plato complains in the Sophista, that the ancient philosophers did not explain themselves clearly in what they published concerning their opinions; this dialogue seems to be an instance of that obscurity.

THE BANQUET

ONE would think was written in rivalry of Xenophon, as seems to be hinted in the introduction. The youthful poet Agatho had gained the prize in tragedy for the first time, and gave an entertainment to his friends on that occasion. Aristodemus, who told Philip the Phœnician concerning this entertainment, informed Apollodorus of it also; and he besides inquired of Socrates himself about several things, so that he could tell the whole story accurately as it happened.

THEY propose to celebrate Love. Phædrus begins with general encomiums. Pau-

T

sanias

sanias observes, that general encomiums were vague; and therefore he distinguishes Love into *celestial* and *terrestrial*. The one has no mother but is the daughter of Uranus, the other is the daughter of Jupiter and Dione, and is called *Popular Love*.

ERIXIMACHUS the physician compares the two sorts of love to the different methods of physic; bodies that are in good health may be indulged, but sick ones not; and shows, that the principle of harmony, concord and love, runs through the whole system of nature and arts, &c.

ARISTOPHANES next delivers his merry fable for explaining the cause of the different kinds of love, *viz.* "That at present we are but half animals; that the former race had four feet and four hands, and being exceedingly strong they turned impious, so that Jupiter cleaved them into two, and sent Apollo to heal up the wound. Hence, according to him, Love is the one half of ourselves seeking

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 147

ing after its other half: and merrily exhorts people to be good, least they be cloven once more, then they would appear like pictures at a side-view with half a face and one foot. Agatho gives a fine poetical encomium. Socrates agrees so far with Agatho's plan, first, to enquire what love is, and then what are its effects. Agatho called Love a beautiful god: Socrates refutes this; but then he is not to be called ugly, being a medium kind of being, neither good nor bad.

DIOTIMA the prophetess, who taught Socrates, proved to him, that Love was not even a *god*, nor yet a mortal, but a *dæmon* or medium between the two. *Love is the interpreter and carrier between gods and men, who keeps up the communication* *.

T 2 : THEN

* IN this we neither need to blame Plato, nor suppose that he means any intermediate aerial dæmon, &c. The plain meaning seems to be, that our good actions and our prayers are acceptable in the sight of God, only when they proceed from the love of God and goodness; and that without this disposition of mind we cannot expect blessings and favours from the Deity. Thus *Love is the carrier between gods and men*.

THEN he tells that well known fable about the origin of Love, "When the gods were feasting at the birth of Venus, *Plenty* the son of Prudence got himself drunk, and falling asleep in Jupiter's garden, *Poverty* stole to him, and he begot a son upon her; this son was Love. Hence the qualities of Love are of a mixt nature, participating of his father's and his mother's genius, &c. This speech seems ascribed to Diotima, that the shamefulnefs of their unnatural male-passions might be more strongly inculcated.—Love is the desire of generation and birth in beauty, whether of body or of mind; it rejoices and delights to plant in a proper soil, *but is shocked and melancholy when it is thrown away on an improper soil, which is always ugly in the sight of every god.* The desire of procreation in animals is an impulse of the soul after immortality: so is it in works of genius and public spirit; thus Homer, Lycurgus, Solon, &c. Beauty in bodies is one motive to love, but that love should not be confined, but calm and cool, considering that beauty is

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 149

is one uniform thing, and the same in all. But far superior to this is the love of the mind, and of knowledge and generous employments. Thus, gradually proceeding, if one at last beholds the real self-existent divine beauty not contaminated with the trifles of mortality, such a one produces real virtues in his life, and becomes a friend to God, and if any man can be immortal it is he. Upon this Alcibiades comes in drunk, and says a thousand fine things in praise of Socrates. Aristophanes, Agatho and Socrates continue drinking all night. Socrates was proving that a comic writer could also be a tragic one, and the contrary. The other two went to bed in the morning, and Socrates went about his ordinary business.

PHÆDRUS.

LYSIAS the orator had written a dissertation to persuade a beautiful young person, that favours ought to be granted rather to one who did not love than to a lover, Socrates was very desirous to hear this discourse,

courſe, and they went away together out of Athens, and ſat down to read it under a ſpreading plane-tree on the banks of the Illyſſus, beſide a purling ſpring. The whole ſcenery is charming; and in that romantic ſacred grove, as one may ſay, he ſeems to catch the inſpiration of the Muſes. Phædrus reads the ſpeech. Socrates begins to criticize; and prefers the writings of Sappho *the beauty* and Anacreon *the philoſopher*, as he ironically calls them. Even I myſelf, ſaid he, feel my breaſt quite full of things not inferior to theſe; which ſurely I had from others though I have forgot from whom.—Then in an ironical poetical ſtrain he imitates the ſpeech and arguments of Lyſias, and proves that no lover ought to be gratified in his baſe deſires; and ſhews the diſmal conſequences of vicious love. Having finiſhed, he was about to croſs the Illyſſus and return, but he ſaid his uſual ſignal checked him; he imagined that he heard a voice from the groves that would not ſuffer him to depart till he had expiated his crime, by the imperfect

and

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 151

and illiberal account which he had given of love.—Therefore he seriously begins anew to celebrate virtuous and heavenly love in a sublime poetical allegory, intimating, that the soul is immortal, being indued with a self-moving power: it has two impelling principles, a general desire of happiness connected with the love of virtue, honour and knowledge; the other is a natural appetite for pleasure. These are the two horses yoked in the chariot of the soul, reason is the charioteer, &c. heaven is the prize for which they run, &c. If wisdom, goodness, and other amiable qualities that reign in heaven could appear under any corporeal image perceptible to our senses, they would excite unbounded love. At present beauty is the only thing of which we can discover the image by the acutest of our senses the eye. Hence it excites great love in the soul who remembers any thing of that beauty which it beheld in heaven in its pre-existent state, &c. Happy they who can love in a manner consistent with virtue, and to whom love be-
comes

comes an incitement to generous and noble actions! after death their souls shall fly to the celestial regions: but they who give themselves up to vice and sensual enjoyments shall sink down below the earth, and wander through the pit of darkness and confusion for nine thousand years.—After this he proceeds to criticise on Lysias, whose introduction he compares to the insipid verses on Midas's tomb, that had neither head nor tail, and are literally thus:

A brazen virgin I, and on Midas' tomb I lie,
While water runs and wood doth grow
Remaining here on this lamented grave,
That Midas here doth lie
I let the passengers know.

Then he proceeds to make curious observations on oratory, as a sequel and completion of what had been disputed in the Gorgias concerning true eloquence, and gives the character of several eminent writers on that subject. The whole is concluded with a prayer to the gods for internal beauty, and
for

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 153

for so great a quantity of riches as none but a philosopher could carry away.

H I P P I A S,

WHOM we have seen before, was now come to Athens again. He prefers the sophists of his time to the ancients, because the ancients did not understand the art of making money. He himself made a great deal wherever he went except at Lacedemon; but the Lacedemonians would give him nothing. Socrates asks him what beauty is. The sophist gives many definitions which are found to be insufficient. Socrates concludes, that they had somehow verified the common proverb, "Beautiful things are difficult."

P H I L E B U S.

WHETHER wisdom or pleasure was the chief good, or whether the chief good was something different from both. This inquiry includes that dispute, *viz.* in what respect all things are *one*, and *one* is all things, which is introduced for shewing that there

U

is

154 A B S T R A C T o f

is a difference in the kinds of pleasure.—Philebus asserted, that pleasure, mirth and joy were the best of all human possessions. Socrates asserted, that wisdom, temperance, prudence, art, were superior to these; but that a mixture of the two was best of all.—That motion which affects the soul and body is called *Sensation*. When these motions which the Soul has had in conjunction with the body are resumed afterward by the soul alone, this is called *Memory*.—As there are true and false *opinions*, so there must be true and false *pleasures*.—The strongest pleasures and pains are felt in the greatest agitation of the mind, &c. Having observed that the chief happiness in this life is of a *mixed kind*; the next step is to take care that this mixture be of a proper sort, &c.—The whole dialogue is accurate, and gives a curious analysis of the passions, and seems to deserve to be called *a specimen of demonstration in morals*.

M E N O N

THE Thessalian having been Gorgias's scholar, began boldly to enquire of
Socrates

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 155

Socrates if virtue could be taught. Socrates desires him first to tell what virtue is, which he confidently undertakes; but his answers are found to be insufficient. Then he turns angry, and compares Socrates to the Torpedo, which benumbs every one who comes near it. Why should you enquire after virtue, said he, seeing you profess you do not know what it is? for you will not know when you have found it. In answer to this, Socrates complains of those quibbles that favour idleness and discourage inquiry, and supposes that *Learning* is only a recollection of former knowledge in the soul; and illustrates it by the answers of Menon's boy about the length of the side of a square that would be double of a given square. It is worth while to remark, that Socrates tells Menon, that he did not *even attempt to govern himself that he might be free*. Anytus also is a speaker in the dialogue, and appears much in character, and quarrels with Socrates very unjustly. We find that Menon was Anytus's guest; also that he was a friend and ally to the king of Persia. These deli-

cate hints that are here given of Menon's temper and connections appear quite agreeable to his character and actions, as they are described by Xenophon. If some people had observed these things, they would not so rashly have affirmed that Xenophon has blackened Menon's character out of envy to Plato.—As the discourse proceeds, Menon still insists upon their inquiring whether virtue could be taught, without previously determining what virtue is. The arguments prove that it could not.—To illustrate this hypothetical method of inquiry, a geometrical problem is mentioned, *viz.* to inscribe a given triangular space in a given circle, without regarding the limitation of the problem *.—*These and the like instances show what a considerable progress was made in geometry before Euclid's time.*

THE FIRST ALCIBIADES.

THIS dialogue may afford excellent instructions to those who are ambitious of engaging in affairs of state, and shows how

* THE meaning of this passage is not sufficiently clear.

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 157

how necessary it is that they be well accomplished for the undertaking. Alcibiades was a young man of the finest person, the best connections, and greatest natural abilities, in Athens. Socrates convinces him, that though he should prevail against his rivals in Athens who were as ill educated as himself, yet he had more formidable rivals to encounter in war and politics, namely, the Lacedemonian kings, and the king of Persia, who were incomparably richer, more powerful, and better educated than Alcibiades. Socrates therefore strongly inculcates this maxim upon him, *Know thyself*. But because no one is able truly to know himself who has no just idea of human nature, and because they who are influenced by the strong prejudices of ambition are perhaps the readiest of all men to judge by an erroneous standard, it is here shown, "That the soul is properly the man, and not the body." "And what is most divine in the soul, not what is inferior." And, "That the soul is most divine when it bears the nearest resemblance

blance to GOD."—*As the same things are for the public that are for private advantage, and as the procuring of justice and wisdom are most for a private man's interest, so to improve the state in these virtues is more for its advantage than to enlarge its dominions.*

THE SECOND ALCIBIADES

SHOWS the folly and vanity of people's ordinary wishes and prayers; and, in particular, seems intended to correct an error which the generality of men in all ages have been liable to, namely, to place religion in external and expensive forms of devotion, and not in the inward rectitude and purity of the heart and life.—That was a noble prayer of the poet, *King Jove, give us what is good whether we pray for it or not, and though we pray for what is evil command it far away.* Rash prayers proceed from ignorance; prudence is the knowledge of what we should say or do.—The knowledge of a great many sciences is useless or even hurtful without the knowledge of *that which is best.*

Thus

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 159

Thus it is a misfortune to an orator that he can plead, if he knows not what is good for the state. Thus the most divine and wisest of poets Homer, says ænigmatically of Margites, "That he knew many things, but it was evil for him that he knew them:" viz. because he was a bad man.—The public prayers of the Lacedemonians resembled the above mentioned prayer of the poet; and the oracle of Jupiter Ammon declared, that these prayers were more acceptable than the costly sacrifices of Athens.—*And indeed it would be a sad matter if the gods had more regard to sacrifices and gifts than to the soul, whether or not it was just and holy. Any state or private person, after committing a great deal of wickedness against both God and man, may easily pay an annual tribute of presents and costly sacrifices; but the gods, having no inclination to take bribes, despise all these things, &c.*

CHARMIDES

BEGINS with mentioning Socrates's long absence, and his return to Athens after
the

the famous battle of Potidæa. Then there is an account of a most beautiful youth, who excelled also in temperance, modesty, and a fine genius. Socrates asks him what temperance is. Charmides gives several definitions which are insufficient. Critias, who was the boy's tutor and relation, takes up the discourse, and the inquiry is carried on with great subtilty of distinction, but the question is not resolved.—Critias recommends to his pupil to become Socrates's scholar, and he readily agrees to it. This Charmides was a near relation of Plato's. We have some account of him in the Theages: he afterwards met with a misfortune for not yielding to Socrates's advice.

L A C H E S.

NICIAS and LACHES, men of eminent character in Athens, are consulted about the education of two boys, and having differed in their opinions they resolve to ask Socrates; who observes what an important thing education is, and how necessary it

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 161

it is that they who undertake to advise concerning it, and who pretend to teach, be themselves duly qualified for the office; and therefore asks Nicias and Laches how they came to know what was the proper plan of education. In return to this Nicias tells his friend, that when one enters into conversation with Socrates, though they begin upon any other subject, yet Socrates never gives over till he lead the person by the train of his discourse, so that he is obliged to give an account of himself, *viz.* in what manner he lives at present, and how he has behaved through his past life. When once he is got into this train, Socrates does not part with him until he has examined these things in an elegant and distinct manner. But, says Nicias, “ I am acquainted with Socrates,
 “ and know that one must meet with these
 “ things from him, and am sensible that I
 “ myself shall do so: yet I have joy in the
 “ man's company, and do not think there
 “ is any harm in being put in mind if we
 “ have done or are doing any thing that

“ is wrong. On the contrary, he who sub-
 “ mits to these things becomes more cau-
 “ tious in his future life, and acts agree-
 “ ably to Solon’s maxim, *being willing and*
 “ *desirous to learn so long as he lives*, not ima-
 “ gining that old age when it comes brings
 “ wisdom always along with it.”—Here
 seems to be the genuine meaning of Solon’s
 maxim, and a sentiment worthy of the ami-
 able character of Nicias: to which Laches
 replies, I also am desirous to learn while I
 am growing old, let Solon grant me one cir-
 cumstance only, *viz.* that the teacher be a
 good man, lest I should appear to be a dull
 scholar while I learn with disgust.—Laches
 takes occasion to inform Socrates, that he
 had a good opinion of him, on account of
 his behaviour when they were together in
 battle. In the sequel of the dialogue they in-
 quire what fortitude is, and several imperfect
 definitions are refuted, but the question is
 not fully determined. Beside the general
 inquiry concerning fortitude, this dialogue
 also seems to point out an important lesson

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 163

to parents, namely, that they should ask themselves whether or not they are proper judges of the plan of education for their children.

LYSIS

WAs a beautiful boy, the eldest son of one of the richest and most illustrious families of Athens.—Socrates asks him, Don't your parents love you, and wish you to be as happy as possible? Yes. Well then, they surely indulge you in all your desires, and let you do whatever you have a mind? No indeed, that they do not. What if you should take the fancy to drive one of your father's chariots, would they hinder you? Yes, surely. Do not they at least suffer you to drive any of his mules in the cart, and whip them at your pleasure? By no means. But they surely allow you to conduct and dispose of yourself at your own pleasure? How could that be? said Lysis. What! does any one govern you? Yes, the pedagogue. And what does he with you? Why, he conducts me to the schools. And do the school-masters rule

you too? By all means. Really, my boy, you have many masters: but I suppose when you get home beside your mother, she will be ready to let you have your will, and you may do what you please with her wooll, or the loom when she is weaving, or the shuttle, or any other instruments of her industry. Indeed she is so far from it, that I would be soundly beaten if I touched them.—*It seemed worth while to give a short sketch of this as a specimen of ancient manners.*—In the sequel of the dialogue Socrates inquires into the cause of friendship.—Our instructors the poets have said not amiss, “That a likeness of character produces friendship, under the influence and direction of the deity.” But we must not understand this as if bad men could have friendships, for bad men have no fixed character by which they can be said to resemble any thing.—Then he mentions a difficulty, that even merit and virtue may not be the source of friendship, because a good man is compleat in himself, and has no need of outward things to his happiness; and

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 165

and there is often envy and difference among men upon the very account of merit of the same kind. Thus Hesiod says, *Bards hate bards, and beggars envy beggars.*—This however leads them to agree, that the great Origin of friendship is one general friend, the author of all things that are amiable, and of whom all amiable and desirable objects are only a faint representation.

HIPPARCHUS.

IT is here proved that the love of gain is not an evil in its own nature: but the important question is to know wherein our real interest consists. It is worth observing from this dialogue, that the proportion of gold to silver at that time in Athens was twelve to one *.

MENEXENUS.

PLATO, who in all his compositions appears to have had the interest and prosperity of Athens always at heart, composed this

* Which is near the rate it was at in Europe about a hundred years ago.

this speech as a funeral oration upon those who had fallen in the service of their country; after the model of Pericles's famous one in commemoration of those who had fallen in the first year of the Peloponesian war.— This speech celebrates the Athenians for their generous public spirit, which prompted them on all occasions, from the earliest records of time, to venture their lives and fortunes gloriously for the liberties of their country, and the liberties of Greece. Of these he gives a distinct account. He shows the sad consequences of civil dissentions, *and that had it not been for these, the Athenians had been invincible by all the world.*—There was a liberal and judicious provision made at Athens for the children or parents of those who had lost their lives in the service of the state. The boys were educated at the public expence, and appeared at those funeral orations in arms given them by the city. These he exhorts to imitate the virtue and bravery of their ancestors; and comforts the old people who were to be maintained by the state.

THE

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 167

THE SOPHIST.

BY an appointment, after the dialogue with Theætetus, Socrates and his friends meet again next day, and Theodorus brings along with him a stranger, an eminent philosopher and disciple of Parmenides.—It is proposed to enquire what kind of an animal the Sophist is, and his character is investigated by a long induction full of subdivisions and distinctions, which it will be difficult to follow. 'Tis difficult also to find words capable of expressing the various names that are so easily coined in the copious and flexible Greek.—'Tis agreed that the Sophist is possessed of art. Arts are twofold, *Effective*, as agriculture, &c. *Acquisitive*, as hunting, fishing, &c. What do you call that sort of hunter who pursues the footed terrestrial game, the tame or wild animal man, to decoy money from him? The Sophist.—Who is that mercantile animal who trafficks from city to city, making sale of learning, language, and virtue? The Sophist. Thirdly, He is a retailer well versed in the arts of the market.

market. Fourthly, A vender of his own opinions instead of learning. Fifthly, He is of the contradicting kind, and of that sort who make profit by their disputes.—See what a variable animal he is; it will require both our hands to catch him.—The diacritic or secretive art is twofold, either that which separates the bad from good, or the good from bad; this last kind is called *Purification*, of which there are two sorts, one for the body and one for the mind. The body is subject to two evils, diseases and deformity: for diseases, physic; and for deformity, the gymnastic art. The impurities and deformities of the mind are vice and ignorance.—For insolence, injustice and cowardice, punishment is proper; and for ignorance, instruction.—Instruction is either by advice like a father, or in a more severe way when the person is self-conceited, by refuting his absurdities, and making him condemn himself. Thus having purified his mind from pride and false opinions, he becomes more modest and willing to hearken to truth.—Pray, do not the disputes of the
Sophist

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 169

Sophist resemble this method? Yes, and a wolf resembles a dog; but we should beware of trusting to likeness. We may suppose the Sophist himself at a loss how to escape from our researches. We may remember the five forms in which he already appeared to us. The sixth character is doubtful: however, let us suppose him a purifier of the soul from those opinions that obstruct truth.—The Sophists contradict concerning divine and invisible things, concerning the heavens and the works of nature, concerning all laws and political constitutions, and all arts; and they profess to teach others to do the same: and because they contradict every thing, they seem to their scholars to know every thing. The knowledge of the Sophist therefore is not real, but of the fantastic kind, deceiving youth with false images of things, held up to them at a distance, instead of reality. Therefore, seventhly, the Sophist is of the imitative wonder-working kind.—These likenesses that depend not upon real symmetry and proportion, but on the appearance of it,

Y

may

may be called *Phantasms*, like the upper parts of a large picture, which painters are obliged to represent smaller, because they are supposed to be seen farther off. That art which presents phantasms instead of real likenesses may be called *Phantastic*.—But here a difficulty occurs, and has occurred in former times. It is objected, there can be no such thing as a falsehood; for a lie is *the thing that is not*, and one can neither say or think *what is not*.—After some quibbles concerning *non-entity*, it is shown, that we can neither express ourselves, nor form any thought about it considered strictly by itself: yet even in these words we just now speak of it somehow as being *one*, and as *existent*.—In these obscurities the Sophist has cunningly involved himself. If you should say, “The Sophist is a former of spectres,” he will ask, what sort of things are these? Images, such as are formed in water, and by *speculums*. But the Sophist will laugh at this, pretending he does not know what water is, or looking-glasses, nor even what sight is.—

Then

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 171

Then he mentions other evasions of the Sophist. In order therefore to obviate these, he proceeds to criticize the notions of Parmenides, and shows in what sense non-entity may sometimes be said to exist, and entity not to exist. He regrets that the ancient philosophers did not explain themselves sufficiently, and seemed careless whether they were understood or not.—In attempting to define existence, as much difficulty occurs as in defining non-existence; and we get no satisfactory answer either from those who say the universe is composed of two principles, *a mixture of heat and cold*, or those who say *the universe is one*. There are others again who affirm, “That nothing exists but earth and stones, and matter, such as they feel with their hands.” There are others again who say, “That intelligible and incorporeal essences constitute the only true existence;” “that bodies are only a continued change of generation instead of existence.”—Materialists must allow, there is justice and wisdom in the world, and a mind

in which these exist, and yet they cannot say that these have any body, &c. Those who maintain intellectual specieses affirm, that through the body and by our senses we participate of *generation*, through our soul and reason we *exist*. The last is uniform and always the same, the first always changing.—But will we say that motion, life, and soul, and wisdom, are not connected with existence? or will we say that mind, and life, and soul, remain for ever immoveable? We are not therefore to consent with those who say, the universe is one, or many intellectual principles all fixed and immoveable: nor allow of those who say, “All that exists is in perpetual motion:” neither motion nor rest are existence, though both motion and rest exist. Existence, according to its own nature, neither stands nor is moved.—He next shows, that there are some qualities that can meet in the same subject, and some not.—He is obliged to prove this; because there are some young people, says he, and some old ones too, who have been late of applying to learning,

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 173

learning, who think themselves wondrous wise when they deny this ; so that you can say, *a man is a man*, and *good is good*, but, according to them, you cannot say, *a good man*, and the like.—He who can distinguish things into their different kinds, and discern how far they communicate with one another, and wherein they are different, is a true philosopher.—But we were seeking for the Sophist.—The philosopher adheres to realities, and is not easily known by the vulgar, because he is surrounded, as it were, with too strong a light, which weak eyes are not able to bear : but the Sophist is not easily seen, because he flies away into the obscure regions of non-entity.—Then he considers existence, motion, rest, identity, diversity, and how far they participate with one another.—These things are applied with great subtlety to answer that objection of the Sophists, that there could be no such thing as a lie or false representation.—He next examines language, opinion, and fancy, viz. what communication they have with non-entity,

entity, and thus if possible catch the Sophist in his own net.—Having finished this, he concludes, “It is now proved that there
 “may be false speech and opinions, and
 “false imitations of realities, and an art
 “of deceiving founded on these.”—He determines the Sophist to be of two kinds, either he who in long counterfeit speeches decoys and imposes on the public, or he who in private conversation and short speeches makes a man contradict himself.—Upon the whole, he sums up his character to be *of the contradiction-working, counterfeiting sort, of the opinionative, imitative, fantastic kind; and from the broodings of his own imagination, mixing not a divine, but a human wonder-working portion of art in his discourses.* Of this family and blood we may say that the Sophist is sprung.

T H E S T A T E S M A N .

HAVING described the Sophist, he proposes to describe the Statesman. This dialogue seems to be an introduction to his
 books

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 175

books of a republic. He divides all knowledge into practical and speculative. To speculative knowledge belongs the *imperative* or *ruling character*. The political art is confined to one sort of herding animals, *Man*, and those who govern men; and is one branch of the general *herd-feeding* character.—To illustrate this he tells a curious old fable concerning the primitive state of the world, how that formerly the sun and stars rose where they now set, and that GOD (giving testimony to Atreus) changed these motions to their present state. There were scattered fragments of this fable among the Greeks, he says, but no body had told the whole story before, nor the connection of its causes. “Sometimes GOD himself conducts this universe, and governs its revolutions; sometimes he remits, when the periodic motions have run that time which is proper for the system. Then again the machine revolves in an opposite direction, having life and understanding from him who made it at the beginning. The revolution in a contrary direction is im-
planted

planted by a natural necessity; for to continue always the same, and in the same manner, is a property only of the divinest things of all. Material nature is not of this rank. What we call the heavens and this world has received many blessings from its Author; but partaking of body, it was impossible that it should not also partake of change. Nevertheless it is carried as much as possible in the same manner and circumstances, and with one *impetus*; wherefore it has got a circulation, being the smallest possible variation of its movement. It is not possible for any thing to move itself for ever, excepting the Conductor of all things that are moved. Neither is it lawful for us to say, that this principle sometimes moves things one way, and sometimes another. From all which it appears, that neither does this world always revolve of itself, nor that it is moved by God in different and opposite revolutions, nor yet that two gods of jarring sentiments move it; but that sometimes it is conducted by a divine cause, enjoying life, and receiving immortality

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 177

lity from its Creator. And again, when it is allowed to go by itself, being for a time let loose, it continues revolving again for many myriads of circulations, being the greatest of all machines, the best balanced, and moving upon the finest axle, &c. God himself governed the first circulations, instead of which this world is now divided among tutelar deities. Inferior divine beings ruled the tribes of animals in those times, so that there was nothing fierce among them, nor any mutual devouring; there were no wars in those days, nor any sedition known," &c. These things, says he, are thus described in fable, to give a more just view of the *herd-feeding* quality when applied to the care of mankind.—Whoever is properly accomplished for these purposes, we call him a *true politician*, or one of *princely qualities*, whether the state is great or small, or whether the government is regal, or of whatever other form. The government of one when without consent of the subject is called *tyranny*, when with consent *regal*.—Then he describes

Z

the

the parts of which his state is to be compounded, and compares them to the different kinds of wooll which a skilful manufacturer prepares, and sorts, and weaves into different kinds of cloth, &c.—Of government there are three original kinds, *that of one, that of the nobility, that of the people.* Out of these again five forms are named, *viz. royalty and tyranny; an aristocracy and oligarchy;* but a well or ill governed *democracy* has not two names.—If the governors were wise and good, it were better that they ruled by no laws. A good prince is capable of doing more good when he is not restrained by statutes. Laws are general uniform rules, but the state of human affairs and their circumstances are forever fluctuating. Even where there are certain established laws, they ought to be varied according as times and circumstances change. There are some things in which the laws ought not to interpose and prescribe rules that are always to be observed; such as medicine, navigation, &c. for that would distress human life.

PLATO'S DIALOGUES. 179

life.—Because no person is born naturally endowed with regal qualities, (as it happens among the bees,) people therefore are obliged to make laws for government, following, as much as possible, the plan of a well regulated state.—Should we wonder then that any state meets with misfortunes considering the necessary imperfection of its laws? Should we not rather wonder how some states have stood so very long? *Many states indeed, like ships, have perished, and will yet perish through the worthlessness of their sailors and their pilots, who imagine themselves very knowing while they are immensely ignorant of the science of politics.*—A monarchy limited by laws is the best of the six forms; but unlimited, it is the worst, and very hard on the subject.—Aristocracy is of a medium kind.—A democracy is always a weak constitution; it is able to do neither great good nor evil, because the power is scattered into so many hands. Hence of all lawful governments it is the worst; and when lawless it is the best of ill governments. When people are dis-

posed to be turbulent and mischievous, a lawless commonwealth is the best for them to live in; and it is the worst for those who are modest and sober.—A sober man will live happiest of all under a legal monarchy, excepting under the seventh form of government, (which he does not explain, probably it is a mixture of the three forms.) He calls them who have power in those lawless democratical states, only *a set of leaders in sedition, "servile imitators, juglers, and of "all sophists the grossest sophisters on earth."* The true political character is infinitely distant from these.—Military skill, jurisprudence, and eloquence are subservient only to true political knowledge, which regulates and directs their use, and corrects the natural failings of the various characters of mankind, by proper plans of education, and combines those characters together for the public good by the affinities of marriages and other civil bonds.

THE REPUBLIC

BEGINS in the most simple and easy manner, though it is known to have cost much pains, having been altered twenty several ways.—“ I went down yesterday to
 “ the Piræum with Glaucon, Aristo’s son,
 “ to pray to the goddess, and see how they
 “ would conduct the festival, it being the
 “ first time of their performance. The pro-
 “ cession of our countrymen was beautiful,
 “ neither was that of the Thracians less
 “ decent and splendid. Having said our
 “ prayers and seen the procession, we were
 “ returning home, when Polemarchus, ob-
 “ serving us at a distance, bid his servant
 “ run, and desire us to wait for him.” &c.—

Socrates is at last persuaded to return with Polemarchus to his father’s house, where they find the good old man crowned with flowers on account of the holiday, and sitting among his friends. His character is a fine example of that chearfulness and good nature which is the common attendant of a

virtuous

virtuous old age; and there are some who can reflect with pleasure that they have known instances of this kind. The inquiry soon begins concerning *justice*, which is first defined to be, "to give every one his due." Socrates shows the imperfection of this definition. Then Thrasymachus breaks in upon the discourse, and calls justice "that which is for the interest of the superior;" and adds, that the greatest injustice is productive of the greatest happiness, such as in the case of perfect tyranny.—In order to refute this, Socrates shows, that magistracy was not appointed for the sake of the rulers, but of the subject; and that to suppose a society perfectly unjust was impossible and absurd. [All *art* aims at the advantage of that of which it is the *art*. The *shepherd-art* hath no other aim but the good of the sheep. Every government, in as far as it is *government*, considers always what is best for the subject.—If there was a city of good men, the contest would be, *who should not govern*, as it is now, *who shall govern*. Even a society of thieves

PLATO'S REPUBLIC. 183

thieves and robbers must observe justice among themselves, or they could not possibly subsist, &c. Such also is the malignant influence of injustice, that where it is in any *individual*, it still retains its proper nature, and produces the same effect as in communities, rendering a man unfit for action whilst he is in sedition and disagreement with himself, and an enemy both to himself and to the just.] Hence it is manifest, that justice and goodness are, in some measure, at least, necessary to happiness, either in public or private life.—These things are explained only in a general manner in the first book. But not having defined accurately what justice is, the inquiry cannot be supposed as yet to be compleat.

B O O K II.

THRASYMACHUS being now silenced, Plato's brother, Glauco, takes up the discourse, and wants to have this question farther explained. He would have it proved, that justice is desirable for its own sake.—It has been

been affirmed, says he, "That justice proceeds from inability to oppress." "That all men would be rogues if they durst." "That injustice makes people miserable only when it is unsuccessful." And therefore he desires to see the advantage of justice and virtue, even when one is believed to be a bad man on that account; and when it is the occasion that the just man is, perhaps whipt, imprisoned, chained, his eyes put out, and perhaps even his flesh cut in pieces from his body.—As an exaggeration of the difficulty, Adeimantus requires Socrates to shew the excellency of justice, abstracting also from the rewards that are represented by the poets to attend it; such as great honour and prosperity in this world, and great affluence of pleasures in the life to come: so that one would think, according to some poets, the only reward of virtue in the other world was, that they were to be eternally drunk. Other poets also give it out, that the gods are easily appeased, and brought to favour vice and injustice, &c. Abstract, says he, from all these things,

PLATO'S REPUBLIC. 185

things, and show the excellency of justice in its own intrinsic nature.—In order to do this, it is proposed to inquire into the nature of justice in a state, that the nature of justice may be the better understood when referred to individuals: like as if one was reading any distant writing in large letters.—Society has its origin from the wants of men for their mutual assistance.—It is more natural that the husbandman should bestow all the four parts of his time on agriculture, and let each one mind his own trade, than that he should spend one part on cultivating the field, one on masonry, one for making his clothes, and one for his shoes.—If we suppose the people of this society living in great plainness, upon bread and wine and the fruits of the earth, their number will not be great. But supposing them to live according to the more elegant and expensive methods of entertainment that usually prevail among mankind; this necessarily will increase our state prodigiously. Every thing concerning clothes, houses, furniture, must

A a

be

be altered and improved. There must be painters, statuaries, musicians, comedians, cooks, confectioners, and many others. Thus our wants increasing, we will invade our neighbours rights to supply them, and they will invade ours; thus we shall have wars, and shall need soldiers.—*As these are the guardians of the state, it ought to be their sole study to improve themselves in the knowledge of military affairs, and to have no other employment. One cannot be a good shoemaker to-day and a soldier to-morrow: to be a good soldier one must have it for his sole trade.*—Hence it is necessary to train those guardians of the state so as to be innocent and mild to the citizens, and fierce to the enemies: therefore we should begin early with their education, and prohibit those fables that dishonour the gods; which, though they were true, and could be explained by allegory, they ought not to be rashly told to foolish and precipitant young people. [In giving a model for proper fable, Socrates lays it down as a fundamental principle, that God
is

PLATO'S REPUBLIC. 187

is always to be represented such as he is; *as essentially good*; the cause of *good*, and of no *evil*. And when represented as the cause of *sufferings*, those sufferings must be considered as beneficial.—A second model of theology is, “That the Divine and God-like nature is in all respects without a lie.” “That God is true both in word and deed; that he is neither changed himself, nor deceiveth others; neither by visions, by discourses, nor by signs; neither when we are awake, nor when we sleep.”]

B O O K III.

NEITHER would we allow of those fables which represent death as terrible, and the shades below as very hateful; these representations tend to inspire cowardice. [The composers of fable are not to represent worthy persons as overcome with laughter. Our youth must be formed to temperance, and no fables be composed which represent the immoderate indulgence of loose desires. No representations are to be made which

may encourage covetousness; nor any base action be ascribed to the gods or heroes: Every one will easily forgive himself his own naughtiness, when he is persuaded that the near relations of the gods have done things of the same kind.]—We would accustom the inhabitants of our city to a simple and plain stile, not poetical and figurative.—Tragedy and comedy are of the imitative kind; dithyrambic is narrative; epic poetry takes in both.—We would take care that the guardians of our state be not imitators of any but generous, noble, and manly characters, &c.—We would reject all music which is too rich and intricate in its harmony and composition; that also which is too melancholy, or too light; and approve of that kind only which is proper for imitating *manliness, dignity, sobriety, bravery*.—[Beauty of expression, fine consonancy, propriety and excellence of numbers, must be subservient to good sentiment; not to that stupidity, which in complaisant language is called *good nature*, but an understanding truly adorned

adorned with a beautiful and fine temper.—
 With regard to painting, architecture, and
 the other arts, there is a *propriety* and *impro-*
priety. *Impropriety*, *Discord* and *Dissonance*
 are the sisters of *Ill-speech* and *Ill-sentiment* ;
 their opposites are the sisters and imitators
 of *Moderate* and *Good-sentiment*.—As we
 would oblige our poets to make their poems
 the representation of *good sentiment*, so we
 ought to restrain all other artists from the
ill, undisciplined, illiberal and indecent manner,
 lest our guardians being furrounded with ill
 representations, they contract imperceptibly
 some mighty evil into their souls. We should
 seek out such artists as are able handsomely
 to trace the nature of *the beautiful and the de-*
cent, that our youth dwelling as it were in a
 healthful place, may be profited at all hands;
 that from their beautiful works something
 may be conveyed to the sight and hearing,
 like a breeze bringing health from salutary
 places, imperceptibly leading them on di-
 rectly from childhood to the resemblance,
 friendship and harmony with right reason.

The

The man who has been thus educated, perceives quickly whatever workmanship is defective, and not handsomely executed ; and being disgusted in a proper manner, he will praise what is beautiful, rejoicing in it, and receiving it into his soul, be nourished by it, and become an excellent and good man ; but whatever is ugly he will in a proper manner despise and hate, whilst yet he is young, and before he is able to understand reason ; and when reason comes, such a one as hath been thus educated will embrace it, knowing it perfectly well from its internal relation with him.] Thus we see that we cannot be truly musical ourselves, nor those we educate, unless we have before us always just ideas of temperance, fortitude, liberality, magnanimity, and the other kindred virtues, and their opposite vices ; and regulate our conduct by those views on all occasions, small or great. If therefore there was any mind in which these virtues dwelt, and the external form was corresponding, would not that be one of the most beautiful spectacles
that

PLATO'S REPUBLIC. 191

that one could see? This concord and harmony of mind is the only proper foundation for virtuous love and friendship. This much for music.—The first gymnastic exercise should be to teach moderation in diet, not luxurious with different incitements to flatter the palate. Plain and simple food produces health, plain and simple music promotes sobriety. Æsculapius and his sons Podalirius and Machaon did not prescribe long rules concerning diet, because they supposed men to be temperate without rules, and because, if the constitution was broke, it was better that they should be no longer a burden to the state. A physician may cure diseases the better for having the experience of them in his body, but a judge ought not to know evil but by the help of science and observation. [One who has committed many iniquities is cunning and suspicious, and when he converses with his like is thought wise, as he regards those patterns which he has within himself; but when he approaches to the good and more aged he appears

appears foolish, and suspicious out of season; and ignorant of integrity of manners.]— People who apply to the gymnastic exercises alone, become too harsh and rugged in their character; they who apply solely to the muses become too soft. We should be at great pains to select those that are fit for saving the government; observe if they be lovers of the public good, of sagacity, acuteness, and temperance. [They must be set on trials of labours and pains; and as those who lead on young horses against noises and tumults observe whether they are frightened, so must they when young be led into dreadful things, and again be thrown into pleasures, trying them more than gold in the fire, whether one is hard to be seduced, and appears composed amidst the assaults of fear and pleasure, being a good guardian of himself and of the music which he learned. He who in childhood, in youth, in manhood, hath been thus tried, and hath come out incorrupted, is to be appointed governor of the state.] We should form them from their youth,

PLATO'S REPUBLIC. 193

youth, by telling them such stories as the Phœnician fable; "that people were created originally out of the earth;" that we are all originally brethren; but that those whom God intended for government he mixed gold with their constitution; with those of the auxiliary kind silver; and with the husbandmen and mechanics iron: therefore every one should keep to the province he was fitted for by God; and those who have the celestial gold in their souls should not contaminate themselves, by seeking after gold on this earth.

B O O K IV.

TIs hard, says Adeimantus, that your governors are to be more confined in their pleasures and possessions than other people. Socrates replies, we are not framing a state for the interest of any particular person, but of the whole. We would allow them neither to be very rich nor very poor, because either of these would have bad effects. [For example, a potter when enriched

B b

does

does not still seem desirous of minding his art, but becomes more idle and careless than before, and becomes a worse potter; and when through poverty he is unable to afford himself instruments, or any thing else belonging to his art, the work he performs shall be the worse for it, and his sons and others he instructs shall be the worse workmen.]—But what shall this poor state do when making war with a rich one? Do not call it a rich *one*, says Socrates, for any state that becomes exceeding rich, from that instant becomes *many states*, and is full of internal discord. The limit to the state that we would form is to increase so long as it can continue *one*, but no farther.—Right education and diet from early years raises up sober and virtuous people; these again advance still farther in merit, and train up children still better than themselves.—We should take great care of the music, and not make innovations in the kind of it. *No state ever changed its musical measures without changing also its most important laws.*—If people were properly educated
all

all the laws about markets, harbours, quarrels, and various frauds and disputes, would become superfluous; *but without this they may be making perpetual regulations and corrections, and think they are improving the state, and be never a whit the nearer than at the beginning.* Like people who are always sick and taking physic, but who will not alter their bad diet and method of intemperate living.—As for religion, we will admit of no instructor in these matters but Apollo the god of our own country, who is interpreter of religion to all the earth.—A state rightly constituted must be wise, brave, temperate and just.—A state is said to be wise if its rulers and guardians are so; brave when the military order are so; and that is obtained by proper education, like well chosen wooll that does not lose the dye.—Temperance consists in the government of our pleasures and desires. The whole members of a state must be temperate, to deserve the name of a temperate state; like the diapason in music that extends through the whole scale.—By con-

sidering the nature of the different members of a state, and that every one should keep to his own station, hence he discovers justice to be "One's acting his own proper part." This quality gives wisdom, temperance and bravery their due force; and therefore surely this is that fourth quality in a state which we were wanting, viz. *Justice*.—In like manner, examining the soul, we find in it reason, appetite and wrath. The irascible quality joins on the side of reason if it is not perverted.—*Justice*, in the soul, is the due subordination of the several faculties according to their proper rank and value: *injustice* is the usurpation of an inferior faculty over that which is naturally superior, and the rebellion of a part against the whole.—Hence it appears that virtue is the health, beauty, and good habit of the soul; vice the disease, deformity, and weakness of it.—*Thus we have a general view that virtue is the true interest of the soul, whether this virtue be publicly known or private; and vice the evil, though it should pass unpunished.*—But to determine

PLATO'S REPUBLIC. 197

termine this more compleatly, he proceeds to compare the five different forms of government, with the corresponding faculties of the human mind.

BOOK V.

HAVING said in the preceeding book, that all things in his republic were to be common, it is asked in what manner he intends to enact concerning the women and children.—In the first place he would have the women to be trained in learning and the gymnastic exercises; and that they should share with the men in the government and defence of the state in such parts as might be convenient for them to execute.—He endeavours to prove that this scheme is not impracticable, and that it would be for the public good.—He defends the stripping of women in the Palestra from ridicule, because formerly, even in Greece, it was thought ridiculous to strip the men. The Cretans began that custom; then the Lacedemonians; and when once the Greeks felt the advantage of
of

of it, the notions of its being ridiculous entirely vanished.—*The women that he would have thus trained were only the wives of the rulers and the military order, who were to have all their wives and their children in common.* The question is, whether this would be advantageous to the state? Secondly, whether it was practicable?—Here he claims the privilege of airy castle-builders, to indulge himself with the scheme, supposing it really reduced to practice.—In the first place they were to take great care in the marriages, to assort people properly together with respect to age and character, the women twenty and the men thirty years; the best of each sex to be assorted together, and this assortment to be so managed by decent lots, that they who are disappointed may blame their chance and not the governors.—Again, the children of those governors and guardians are to be selected; the sound and beautiful to be carried to the public nursery, and the deformed and diseased removed to some secret place, that the race of the governors
and

PLATO'S REPUBLIC. 199

and guardians may not be allowed to degenerate.—By this community of all things we would put an end to the great contentions that are in all states about *yours* and *mine*, and which produce perpetual convulsions.—Then he goes on mentioning the public advantages of such a constitution, but is interrupted, and required to show that it is practicable.—He begins with confessing the greatness of the difficulty ; but, says he, when we are viewing justice in itself, and the character of a perfectly just man, are we to expect any character absolutely such in real life ? or if a painter should draw a picture of the most perfect human beauty, would you blame his art though no original could be found ?—We must be sensible in common life that there is scarcely any thing practicable precisely as it is described. If therefore we come pretty near to a probable account in this difficult matter we should be satisfied.—The first means of putting such a scheme in practice would be, *either that philosophers become rulers in states, or they who are now kings and*
princes

princes become genuine philosophers.—Then he describes the philosophic character. In the first place, such a one is forward and eager to learn every thing, and insatiable with respect to knowledge.—You shall have many philosophers at this rate, says Glaucon; for there are multitudes every day running about to see, and hear, and learn something.—But these are said to pursue after knowledge to gratify a superficial curiosity; whereas a philosopher, from the love of truth, studies things with stedfast ardor, and follows after realities. The other follows appearances; and though he pursues the external forms of what is good and beautiful, yet he has no knowledge of what is really beautiful and good, or any true standard of justice and goodness in his own mind, and is therefore frequently mistaken in his pursuit.

B O O K VI.

THOSE imperfect philosophers would be improper guardians of the laws. Those of the opposite character are much to be preferred

preferred, if in other respects they are accomplished. To determine this we should examine their qualities early; whether or not they are steadily desirous of the knowledge of the *eternally existent and unchangeable Being*; whether they are steady lovers of truth.—They must be temperate; not covetous, but of a liberal turn of mind, a large heart, and noble sentiments; apt to learn, and of a good memory to retain. [Do you imagine that any understanding which hath greatness of mind, and is fitted for the contemplation of the whole of *time*, and the whole of *being*, can possibly think human life a great matter, or account death any thing terrible?]

—It is objected, that we often see people who have applied a great deal to philosophy turn out quite different characters at last; or if they are good men, they are recluses and useless to the state.—He explains how philosophers of a good character may happen to be useless in the state, from the example of a ship's pilot, who is stronger than any one aboard, but is some-

what deaf and short-sighted, and not very expert in the business of a common sailor, and that the mariners, though entirely ignorant of navigation, should by force or art seize the helm, and then dance, and drink, and steer at random, and praise every one as a person of abilities who could seize the helm by force or fraud, and despise every one who was not eager to do so; and condemn the old pilot as an useless star-gazer, because he did not understand the common affairs of the ship, though his proper business was to observe the stars and the seasons. By this image we may explain why good people and true philosophers are often useless.—With regard to the other objection he observes, that the studies of a philosopher do not tend to make him bad; if we allow that he is a lover of truth, and who, not content with opinions, indefatigably investigates the nature of things. If they are corrupted they can do more mischief than common men, on account of their superior capacity: they are corrupted by the sophists

PLATO'S REPUBLIC. 203

sophists who mislead their judgment and notions; but especially by the false applauses and flatteries of the theatre, by the tumult and impetuosity of public government, and the misapplication of rewards and punishments. No man's integrity can be preserved in such a disorderly and corrupted government without the providence of God.—A fine genius is by these means easily seduced, and puffed up with self-conceit, and if any one attempts to correct his errors and make him see himself, every one becomes an enemy to this instructor. Thus they who were most nearly related in their character to true philosophy are diverted from it, and leave it desolate and forsaken, to be seized upon by unworthy persons who disgrace it. A parcel of little fellows, who seeing the station of philosophy vacant, and the character itself full of honour, jump from their mechanic employments to philosophy; who as their bodies are often lame or tainted by their trades, so are their minds; they are not capable of thinking or acting in a ge-

nerous and liberal manner: like some little bald slave of a blacksmith, who having got some money and a suit of new clothes, and newly delivered from his chains, is going to marry his poor master's daughter, &c. Thus there are few who find true philosophy; but he who tastes it finds it exceeding sweet. He sees the errors prevailing in the public affairs of mankind, but having no assistant dares not venture on that wild beast, the people: fearing to be destroyed he holds his peace observing these things, and resembles a man skulking behind a little wall in the time of a storm, while sand and dust is rolled along: he sees all around him filled with irregularities, and is content if he can pass his life here free from injustice and impious actions, and make his departure in peace and with good hope.—Socrates proceeds to shew the good that philosophers might do in a state where they had the power; and that it was not impossible but that this might happen somewhere.—It next remains to shew what was the proper education

education for those future guardians and rulers.—The necessary qualities rarely meet in one: some are by nature quick and acute for science, of a good memory and capacity to learn, but from the warmth of their temper are unstable: others of a steady character, intrepid in dangers and in battle, are often benumbed and slow in studies. Therefore such a character is to be tried like gold, and proved genuine in pleasures, toils and fears, in the capacity to learn, and in the love of truth and knowledge, not satisfied with appearances of good without reality.—Here it is enquired what is good? As this would be very difficult to explain, he proposes to give some account of the offspring of *Good*.—We call many things beautiful and good, though we again allow that there are not many goods, and that in the abstract there is but *One*.—As the sun is the necessary means of sight, so the child of Goodness, whom the Good being begot similar to himself, stands in the same relation to the mind and to things intelligible.—

“ That

“That therefore which gives reality to things known, and which gives to the perceiver the power of knowing, is the idea of good, and is the cause of knowledge and truth, so far as it is discovered by the mind.”—As the sun enlightens and cherishes all things, so that which is good gives life and existence to every thing, but is not that life and existence.—As the sun rules in a visible and sensible place, so there is another being ruling in an invisible intellectual one. There are two kinds of things, *viz. visible and intellectual*. Visible objects may be divided into two kinds: 1st, Shadows, images, &c. 2dly, The things themselves of which those are the resemblances. The objects of intelligence are also twofold. One sort are those concerning which the mind uses sensible objects, as images, to assist its reasoning. Thus in geometry the properties of some figure are investigated, not of that one which is actually described, but of that real figure which exists only in the mind. 2dly, Those where the mind employs no sensible images, but by help

PLATO'S REPUBLIC. 207

help of the dialectic art assumes certain hypothesis, not as principles, but suppositions only, until by these helps and steps it ascends to some general principle; and having obtained this general principle, descends gradually from thence, by close and necessary connection, to particular cases.

BOOK VII.

BEGINS with comparing the present state of human nature, and this visible world, to the condition of prisoners, from their infancy, confined in a cave, whose entry is long and far from day, and kept for ever in chains with their backs to the light, so that they see nothing but the images and shadows of things thrown upon a little wall before them, and hear echoes only instead of real sounds, so that they think those shadows speak: if one of these prisoners is freed from his chains, and led up to the broad light of heaven, he will be long dazzled and confounded, but coming at last to see realities, and bear the light, he will be unwilling to return below;
or

or if he does he will be now confounded with the darkness, and perpetually disputing with the inferior inhabitants who believe all those images of things to be real. He would afford them laughter, and it would be said of him, that having gone above he was returned with vitiated eyes; that they themselves ought not so much as endeavour to go above, and that whoever should attempt to loosen them and lead them up, if ever they got him into their power he should be taken and put to death. Agreeably to this allegory, learning is not an infusion of knowledge, but a direction of the mind to behold the truth. A wrong byass in education is the reason that we see people of excellent faculties become exceeding vitious. People of mean parts have no scope for action, and are unfit for government, true philosophers will be unwilling having seen the vanity of the world. But in our state we would prevail on them to be grateful, seeing the public had taken care of their education and brought them to this superior light.—It is

next

next inquired what is that education which turns the mind from its present darkness to the light of true philosophy, and the true ascent to *that which is good*? Whatever they are they must be such as will be useful to him as a soldier. We have already mentioned the gymnastic exercises and music, as necessary parts of education. Gymnastic exercise relates to the body; music, according to the plan we prescribed, is ineffectual, and all mechanic trades are illiberal. The first valuable part of education, beside these, is the knowledge of numbers and computation, which is absolutely necessary for a military man, and naturally tends to turn the mind from sensible objects to reason and thinking, in order to distinguish things into their different kinds: besides that the study of numbers naturally tends to sharpen the mind.— The next is geometry, which raises the mind insensibly to the love of truth; besides its use in all incampments, military arrangements, &c. and in the various affairs of life. To these we would add astronomy, which

(bntm

D d

is

is useful in navigation, and the knowledge of the seasons, also in war, but especially as it tends to raise the mind to intellectual objects.—Each of these studies purifies and kindles up some faculty of the soul which would be lost and blinded by other attachments; this would be a greater loss than of a thousand eyes, because by the soul alone it is that we see the truth.—It is observed, that astronomy cannot be rightly studied without the knowledge of solid geometry, astronomy being the motion of solids. This was a part of geometry not commonly known in those days, and the few who understood it were very shy of communicating.—Astronomy, by mere ocular observation, does not raise the mind to intellectual contemplations, but rather tends to confine it more to the senses.—The right method of learning astronomy is to consider the bespangling of the heavens to be the most beautiful of all visible objects: but that the order and proportions that really obtain in the celestial motions (discovered by the mind)

mind) are vastly more beautiful than the apparent ones.—If we would study astronomy with success or advantage, we must reduce it to problems after the manner of geometry.—Along with this we would recommend the study of harmony, which, as the Pythagoreans affirm, has a near relation to astronomy, which Socrates would have to be studied by the computation of proportions, and not by the ear, which is as inaccurate as to study astronomy by the eye alone.—To crown all these accomplishments, our magistrate must be well acquainted with dialectics; not the art of meer words, but the art of reasoning right on all the afore-said principles, that he may be enabled to govern well, and by steps advance in the knowledge of the real nature of things, until he come to know *that which is good*, the noblest acquisition of the human mind. [The dialectic method disengages the eye of the soul, as it were, from a certain barbarian clay with which it was closely shut, using those arts which we have mentioned

as helps and assistants. Those arts we call *Sciences* through custom, but they require a name more expressive *than opinion*, and more indistinct *than science*: we have somewhere already termed it *Demonstration*. The first class is Science; the second Demonstration; the third Faith; the fourth Imagination. The two latter of these are *opinion*, the former two *intelligence*. Opinion respects *what is generated*, and intelligence *real being*. In the same proportion as being is to what is generated, so is intelligence to opinion, knowledge to faith, demonstration to imagination.]—If one is not able to distinguish real from apparent good, he is perpetually dreaming and slumbering through life, and in that condition descends to the shades below, where he may sleep to all eternity.—Then he gives some farther directions for discovering the genius fit for government, such as, not only to be laborious in bodily exercises, but also in learning; neither one who entirely gratified the mind and neglected the body; that he be one who not only
hated

hated a willing lie, but also who hated to be mistaken, &c. We must take care when they are taught to reason, that it be not for contradictions sake; that they do not become litigious and sceptical, and disputations as young people are apt to be: after thirty years of age therefore they are to reason and apply the principles in which they have been educated, the next fifteen years to be employed in the army and other public services, and if in all these they behave well, employ them after fifty years of age to rule the state, and breed up others to succeed them, and when they die let their memory be honoured.

B O O K VIII.

WE have now described the character of a perfect ruler, which we may suppose to correspond with the aristocratical constitution of a state, *i. e.* where the best men govern.—We shall next consider the four forms of government that most commonly prevail in the world: 1st, The ambitious

tious and warlike constitution of Crete and Lacedemon. 2dly, An oligarchy. 3dly, Democracy. 4thly, A compleat despotism, or the absolute rule of one: and consider the different characters of individuals in a state which resemble these political forms, and which give rise to them; for it is impossible that they can have any other origin. A whole is composed of its own parts.—Our state, constituted upon the plan of virtue, will, in time, degenerate, as all things material must do. The cause of this degeneracy is supposed to be the neglect of suitable care about procreation in due time, and of joining proper people together. These he tragedizes in a jocose manner, and expresses mystically in numbers and proportions which cannot be explained. The children of this improper conjunction, being inferior to their parents, will not be such perfect rulers; they will not be so compleatly attentive to the plans of education. Thus the next race will be still less attentive to keep different characters separate; and the muse says, that the
silver

silver being mingled with iron, and the gold with brass, dissensions and war will arise; the brass and iron kind will seek possessions, the gold and silver will endeavour to tend to its ancient constitution. In consequence of these contentions private property will be allowed of; and they who formerly were protected as freemen, friends and nursers of the public, are now enslaved, and obliged to serve in wars and watching for the state. This will be a medium between the former constitution and oligarchy, which pays more regard to gymnastic and warlike accomplishments than to the muses.—A man resembling this state is one who has a great many good qualities, but is very ambitious; who is not covetous at first, but toward old age becomes so, for want of those best preservatives of merit, *reason and polite literature*. Such a character may be supposed to proceed from a father of a virtuous and quiet temper, living in a badly constituted government, who does not chuse to bustle and intrigue for power, but lives retired. His
wife

wife is continually carping at him for want of spirit, and inciting her son to be ambitious, in which the servants join; mean time the father is giving him good instructions, which do not entirely lose their effect; and the son becomes this medium sort of character.—The *timocracy* degenerates into an *oligarchy*, a form of government where those only of a certain quantity of riches are allowed to govern. This is a very bad constitution; for would pilots of a ship be chosen for their riches and not their skill? Besides that it naturally introduces avarice, because a certain quantity of fortune makes one a magistrate. Hence there is perpetual discord between the poor and the rich; hence arise drones without stings, viz. beggars; and drones with stings, viz. thieves and robbers, sycophants and false accusers.—A man resembling this state is one whose father was an ambitious lover of power and honour, who had fallen from the height of grandeur into poverty and disgrace. He seeing the danger of ambition stifles it in his breast,

breast, and being poor he turns his industry entirely to making money. In cases where he can defraud with impunity there he is very dishonest, but for fear of losing all, he preserves a decent character in his common transactions, and subjects one set of passions by the power of others, but not from the pure principles of reason and virtue.—*Democracy* arises from the increase of sloth and corruption in an *oligarchic state*. When the poor people, increasing in number and inured to hardships, observe the purfy fatness and inactivity of the rich, despise them; they say to one another, that the rich men are nothing at all, and upon any trivial occasion fall upon them, banish some, kill others, and divide the government with the rest.—This constitution he compares to those flowery cloths which women and children are very much delighted with. A fine sort of government *where you need not obey the laws except you please*; and is diversified into all sorts of forms, and abounds in a variety of original characters. [And it seems ne-

E e

cessary

cessary for any one who wants to constitute a city, to come to a democratic state as to a general market of republics and chuse that form which he fancies.] Where men may be condemned to death or banishment, and you shall see them walking up and down the streets very heroically, and no body takes any notice of it.—In our constitution we supposed, very needlessly, that a man ought to be accomplished for bearing offices in the state before he gets them, but here he needs only profess *that he is a great friend to the people, &c.* A man of the democratical temper descends from a father of the parsimonious oligarchic character, who, tho' he is born to riches, is yet bred up to hardship and spare diet, but without proper culture from the muses. Happening therefore accidentally to taste of pleasure, he turns extravagant, but is reclaimed for a while by his father's reproofs. By degrees he again relapses into his former vices; and they having got the entire government of him, he is filled with petulance, haughty false notions,

turns

PLATO'S REPUBLIC. 219

turns incorrigible, and will not be reclaimed from his folly. [Calling modesty, stupidity; and temperance, unmanliness; accounting moderation and decent expence to be rusticity and illiberality, they expel them their territories, with many other unprofitable desires; and after the soul is initiated in all extravagant expence, and cleared of the contrary qualities, then with all encomiums and applauses they next lead in *insolence* and *anarchy*, *luxury* and *impudence*, shining with a great retinue and crowned with crowns. *Insolence* they denominate *education*; *anarchy* they call *liberty*; *luxury* they call *magnificence*; and *impudence*, *courage*. If the person is fortunate enough, and does not debauch excessively, when he is somewhat more advanced in years, and when the great croud of desires is over, he admits a part of these which fall in his way, and does not deliver himself wholly up to these that are admitted, but regulates his pleasures by a sort of equity, and so delivers himself up to the government of every incidental desire as it chances,

Should any one tell him there are some pleasures of the *worthy and the good desires*, others of the *ill ones*, and that he ought to seek after and honour those, but to chastise and subject these others. In all these however he dissents, and says, that they are all alike, and indulges every incidental desire; sometimes in drunkenness and the sound of the pipe, sometimes in drinking water and extenuating by abstinence. Then again minding the exercises; sometimes quite indolent and careless, then again applying, as it were, to philosophy; many times engaged in politics, and in a desultory manner, saying and doing whatever happens. If at any time he affects to imitate certain of the military, thither he is carried; or of the mercantile, then again hither; nor is his life regulated by any order or any necessity, but accounting this sort of life pleasant, free and happy, he follows it throughout, and has in his life a great many patterns of republics and of manners.]—It next remains to describe the most beautiful of all constitutions, and
of

of men, *tyranny* and the *tyrant*.—*Tyranny* is bred out of the excess of liberty, the people being always contentious against their magistrates, and insulting those who are willing to obey the laws, as of slavish dispositions.—In such a state children disobey their parents, school-boys despise their masters, and pupils their tutors; old men sit down among the boys and chat low jokes to them lest they should seem too severe, &c.—Every horse or ass that meets you carries his head so high, and jostles rudely against you, if you do not keep out of his way.—In such a state the most sober and decent part are readiest to get money, but that makes them the pasture of that sort of drones who have stings; they will be falsely accused and plundered: this tempts them, whether they would or not, to wish for an oligarchy. This makes the people chuse a protector of their liberties. Then the rich, being overpowered, will have recourse to snares against this protector's life. Then he sues to the people for a guard, which is readily granted

granted him, to the terror of his enemies, who either must fly for it or be cut off,— At first he behaves with softness and obliging airs, smiling and saluting every body, and pretending great care for the people's rights; then he stirs up some war for continuing his authority, in which he takes care that all the free-spirited generous persons be cut off, that they may not be troublesome, &c. This new lord must always keep a good army of foreigners and freed slaves in his service, which will oblige him to plunder sacred treasures for their pay, and make exactions upon the citizens, who then begin to tell him that they have no farther use for his service; but he soon lets them know their own insignificance, and, like an ungrateful parricide, insults and beats them who set him up, &c.

B O O K IX.

A CHARACTER in private life resembling tyranny, may be supposed to arise from a father whose temper was democratical, being a medium between hard austere living

PLATO'S REPUBLIC. 223

living and debauchery: but his son, having the same temptations that his father had, is carried as far beyond his father's manners as he was beyond austerity; so that becoming entirely slave to his passions, or his darling one, perhaps love, he spends his fortune, then robs his aged parents, and when all is gone steals, plunders and robs through the city; and when the number of such fellows increases, they will make the greatest slave to his appetites among them their leader, and either by direct force, or by fomenting and inflaming civil discord, enslave the city.—A state under this tyrannical government is the most unhappy; and the tyrant himself is unhappy, being a slave to some inferior passion in his soul with regard to others of far greater worth, &c. so that he is never free more than the city, nor ever rich, being never satisfied; he lives in continual fear like one living in some remote place, and having many slaves is in constant danger of his life, being obliged to flatter some of them, and free others, for his own safety,

safety, &c. Then examining his condition in several other respects, Socrates finds him full of envy, malice, injustice, impiety, &c. and concludes him to be most miserable, and all those who are under his influence.—Thus justice and goodness appears to be for the greatest happiness of mankind in its own intrinsic nature. This is again examined in another view. It has been observed, that there are three principal faculties of the soul; reason, wrath, appetite; to these correspond three different sorts of men, the philosopher, the ambitious, the covetous. Philosophy tends most to the happiness of men, seeing the philosopher can enjoy more of the pleasures of the other two characters than they can do of philosophy; also because the worth of every thing is judged by experience, wisdom and reason, and not by money or honour. Ambition being more rational, is the next to the love of wisdom. All but the just and virtuous have only a shadow of pleasure. We often are mistaken in judging of pleasure, and call the removal of pain by
that

that name, though there is a middle state of mind between pleasure and pain, as in the case of agreeable or offensive smells. As the body and the objects of bodily pleasure are transient, and changeable in their nature, the mind and the objects of mental pleasure, *viz.* wisdom, knowledge, virtue, are steady and durable. Hence the pleasures of the mind are superior to those of the body.—They who never tasted of wisdom and virtue never tasted pure and perfect pleasure, but pronely bending to the earth like the cattle, obey their appetites, and kick and fight with one another for the gratification of them. The truest pleasures of every kind are those which are conducted and regulated by reason. A tyrant and tyrannical character will therefore be the furthest removed from real pleasure; and a king, or one of regal qualities, who rules himself, will be advanced the nearest to it possible. Oligarchy is in the third step from a good prince, and a tyrant in the third step from oligarchy: therefore a tyrant is distant from the happi-

piness of a good king in the triple proportion tripled, that is seven hundred and twenty-nine degrees farther off.—To shew yet farther that virtue and justice excels intemperance and vice, let us, in imitation of the sphinxes and chimeras of the poets, suppose an image of some strange animal with many heads of various beasts wild and tame, but the head of a man and a lion most conspicuous; if the human head governs the rest by the assistance of the lion, the animal will subsist, but if the other heads are not kept in order and subjection they will bite and devour one another, and destroy the whole animal, or subject the manly and lion-like qualities to the meanness and flattery of the ape, &c.—Hence it appears, that we should either establish a good government in ourselves, or commit that care to others who are wise. What advantage can ill-gotten money give if we ourselves are worse for it? If our frauds are not discovered, this will harden us in evil, whereas if they were, the evil would be restrained, and we ourselves perhaps

PLATO'S REPUBLIC. 227

perhaps reduced to a better mind. A wise man will not regard the habit of his body, his beauty, or his health, so far as to neglect his peace and harmony within, and that proper subordination that ought to be preserved among the faculties of his soul. And though there may not exist any real model on earth, such as we have been describing of a political constitution of a state, yet perhaps there exists such a model in heaven for him who is willing to observe, who, having seen it, will establish such a government as that in his own soul, and regulate his life according to that plan, and none other.

BOOK X.

BEGINS with farther objections against the imitative kinds of poetry, and particularly against Homer. Poets are imitators or painters. The works of artificers are imitated by painting. There is one grand Artificer who makes not only all things that are made by artists, but every thing that springs

from the earth, who forms all living creatures, and himself; besides these also the earth, and heaven, and gods, and all things in heaven, and every thing in hell below the earth. God is the first maker of every thing, artificers the second, painters are in the third step removed from reality.—If any one should say that Homer understood every thing, and could teach in every art; it is answered, that we are deceived by his painting, and that he knew nothing but the common terms. There are no great actions recorded of Homer, neither in the art of war, nor of any political constitution, such as of Charonidas in Italy, or Lycurgus, or Solon; neither any useful or ingenious invention, such as are recorded of Thales the Milesian, or Anacharsis the Scythian; neither had he any imitators in a certain way of life, as Pythagoras; nor followers for instruction in his lifetime, as Prodicus or Protagoras the sophists: but he and Hesiod went up and down Greece to sing their compositions.—All his pretended skill in different arts would

would appear but small if stripped of its poetical ornaments. Homer and other imitative poets may give descriptions of virtue in a figurative manner, without knowing its real nature, as a painter may give the image of a bridle, but knows less of its use and true properties than the man who made it, and far less still than he who is a good horseman.—Tragic poetry is culpable in the instance of grief, which it always extends farther than a good man ought to do. Poetry does not chuse the moderate and equable character in life, because it is harder to imitate, and when imitated is not so readily observed; therefore it plays upon the passions, and raises and strengthens that part of our mind which is our defect, unless when subject to reason. We cannot be strongly affected with grief in viewing the distresses of others, and yet be able to keep our own minds steady when our own case happens to be like these.—Comedy again is apt to encourage a light and scurrile temper. Though Homer was not the source of learning to
Greece,

Greece, yet he was the father of tragedy. In our state we would allow no poetry but the praise of the gods, and of virtuous and good men.—If poetry was also of a good and virtuous tendency it would be very happy, because it is so pleasant.—Upon the whole therefore, what has been said may be of use to make us cautious against an unbounded admiration of it.—It is an important concern to mankind that of their becoming good or bad, especially if we regard a future life. That the soul is immortal we may prove thus: material things are destroyed by that which is their evil, as rottenness consumes wood; rust, iron, &c. injustice is the evil of the soul, but does not destroy its existence. Again, any foreign evil has no influence on any thing while it remains so: thus rottenness of victuals do not destroy the body while they are not assumed internally, and until the body itself becomes rotten. In the same manner that which destroys the body, being no evil to the soul, cannot affect it; so that the soul becomes not the more vitious for sickness or death.

death. That therefore which is neither destroyed by its own evil, nor by an external evil, must exist for ever.—We ought to consider the soul as a pure and uncompounded substance; but, in our view of it at present, as connected with the body and affected by various passions, it appears to resemble the sea Glaucus, when beaten by the ocean and much worn by the waves; he has many shells sticking to him, many pebbles and sea-weeds: thus the soul is always seen distressed with evils, but being related to the immortal nature it should strive to swim ashore, and shake off its earth and shells, &c.—Having shown that virtue is good in its own nature, though attended with no reward, and though there was no punishment to vice, we may now assume that the case is quite contrary, and that virtue is both rewarded and honoured; for as God cannot but see the good man, it is impossible that any thing should happen to him but what is for the best, because he is beloved of God; unless some necessary evil befall

befal him for a former miscarriage: so that whether he be in poverty, sickness, or any other seeming evil, this will always end in good for him, either living or dying; for he will never be neglected who endeavours as much as possible to resemble God.—And the contrary events must befall bad men.—With regard to mankind also, though the wicked should for a while make a good figure in the world, yet they are almost always at last discovered, and loaded with shame and contempt; like those runners who spring away furiously at first, but fail in the coming in; whereas the true racer keeps equably up to the last, and is crowned and applauded.—In the general, therefore, we may affirm, that the good and virtuous are honoured by men, and the wicked punished and expelled society.—But all these things are not comparable in number or magnitude to the rewards attending both after death.—For this purpose we shall tell the story of Er the Armenian, who after he had been dead a good many days came to life upon the funeral

neral pile. He said he was brought to a place where there were two rents in the earth, and two in the heavens opposite to these; between which sat the judges of departed souls. The good and virtuous souls they made ascend to heaven by the gap on their right hand, and the wicked they sent down into the gap of the earth on their left. That the judges told him, he must return to this world again to tell what he should see and hear. He said therefore, that after one thousand years those souls came down again from heaven, and those others ascended from the earth; only that a thousand years were not sufficient to purge some, and others were entirely incurable, such as tyrants and some very wicked men. When these attempted to get out, the cavern roared, and fiery men took and bound and lashed them dreadfully, and showed them to those who were passing by, and told them why they were going to throw those wretches into Tartarus. The souls who ascend from earth and descend

G g

from

from heaven, encamp together on a meadow seven days, and hold mutual converse with their friends of what they saw and heard. Then they are carried away to drink of the river Lethe, and be prepared for entering again into human bodies. After four days journey they see the pillar of light, which connects heaven and earth, and the spindle of necessity, on which the eight orbs revolve. Around with each orb is carried a syren, who sings continually the same note, each, to wit, the tone peculiar to its sphere, and from these eight together one harmony resounds. The three fates, Lachesis, Clotho, and Atropos daughters of necessity, sitting on their thrones, sing in concert with the harmony of the syrens, &c. When the souls were come before Lachesis, a prophet, mounting some lofty tribunal, addressed them in her name, "Souls of a day, the origin of another period of a mortal death-bearing race, destiny shall not chuse you, but you shall chuse your destiny. Whatever life one chuses, by that he shall abide. Virtue only
is

PLATO'S REPUBLIC. 235

is unconfined in every station ; the more or less that one desires of it, he shall have the more or less. The fault is in him who chuses, not in God." Then the lots were cast, and various models of lives were spread before them, that each might chuse in order according to his lot.—Then follows the account of the election of the souls, full of good instructions for the conduct and estimate of life.—Plato concludes, that by the practice of virtue we become friends to the gods and to ourselves ; and shall be happy both here and in our thousand years journey.

M I N O S.

THIS dialogue seems to have been intended by Plato as an introduction to his books of Laws. Law is defined to be *the opinion of the state* ; but because laws ought to be agreeable to truth and justice, law is again defined to be *the invention of what really exists*.—Laws differ, because people often are not able to find out the truth of things.—In various arts and businesses they are best able to give rules or laws who understand

them; as husbandmen, concerning agriculture; shepherds, concerning sheep; and princes, concerning people, &c. The most antient Grecian laws are those of Crete, instituted by Minos and Radamanthus the sons of Jupiter and Europa.—One of the speakers observes, that Minos was esteemed a cruel and bad man. Socrates refutes this imputation upon the authorities of Homer and Hesiod, in opposition to the Athenian tragic poets, who represented Minos as a bad man out of spite, because he made war upon the Athenians, and forced them to pay tribute. It is a great misfortune, says he, for any person to be hated by the poets, for they can do great hurt to one's reputation. But when we attempt to touch the character of any one, we should be afraid lest we speak impiously, by praising a wicked person, or railing at a good man who resembles God. Let us not esteem stocks and stones, and birds and serpents, sacred; but let us esteem a good man of all things the most sacred, and a bad man the most impure.—This dialogue proceeds no further,

ACCOUNT

A C C O U N T
O F
P L A T O ' s L A W S.
B O O K I.

THE speakers in this dialogue are a Cretan, a Lacedemonian, an Athenian. It is said by the Cretan, that states, families and men are mutual enemies; therefore the institutions of Crete and Lacedemon were all contrived for war. But he is obliged to own, that this disagreement can be only between the virtuous and vicious part of states, and even of mens own selves. The Cretan laws should not be contrived merely for giving advantage in war; but for preservation of the state, by procuring all human and divine blessings. The human blessings are, health, beauty, strength, riches; the divine are, prudence, temperance, justice and fortitude. The laws for promoting those human blessings

ings must always have respect to the divine ones; and those laws concerning the virtues are to respect continually that great and leading principle, *the mind and wisdom*. A legislator ought to begin with marriages, then the education of children, both male and female; then his laws should regulate the behaviour of men in the various events of peace or war, good or bad fortune, &c. also their expences of living, their mutual intercourse, &c. that they may act justly. And finally, to regulate what concerns their burial and honours after they are dead, according as they have deserved. Over all these he is to appoint guardians, men of wisdom and integrity, who are to take care that the laws be obeyed. The legislators of Crete and Lacedemon did amiss, in not exercising their youth to resist the assaults of pleasure as well as pain.—The Cretan and Lacedemonian custom of eating in company, and their gymnastic exercises, have their inconveniencies; for the same victuals cannot agree with every constitution,

tion, and their promiscuous assemblies are bad in a seditious state. The method of stripping people for their exercises, first brought in that unnatural passion, which received too great a sanction, from the fable of the Cretan Jove and the Rape of Ganymedes.—Pleasure and pain are two natural fountains, from whence, if we draw at fit times, and in due measure, we shall be happy.—All incitements of pleasure were banished from Sparta, especially excess in drink; but, at the feast of Bacchus, the whole city of Tarentum has been drunk.—Here it is said, that the Scythians and Thracians were drunkards, and the Persians, but with more decency; also the Gauls, Carthaginians and Spaniards.—I never indeed, says he, saw any meeting properly regulated for drinking, though I have seen many. There should be a wise and sober director to superintend those meetings, for good fellowship, to prevent noise and excess.—Epimenides the Cretan came to Athens, and assured them, that Xerxes would miscarry in his

his expedition against Greece; and that he would not at any rate come for ten years, after the time that they apprehended.—To determine how far, and in what manner we may allow the use of wine, let us first inquire what is education for any thing; and we will find, that whatever study we propose, we should pursue it from our youth up, in every circumstance or situation, at our diversions, or any where else.—We may call education, *that which renders people studious to become good citizens, well accomplished, and fit to govern or obey.* But, without seeking a nice definition, we may be convinced of the necessity of education to man who is a wonderful creature, and may be reckoned a divine miracle amid the animal creation, whether we were made in jest or in earnest. We find opposite passions, like so many strings drawing us opposite ways, but the golden and sacred chain of reason is the only one to whose attraction we should yield.—There are two principles in our minds, which, at proper occasions, we should cultivate, namely,

ly, *courage* and *fear*. Courage in war and in adversity; but in prosperity, and amid the temptations of pleasure, cultivate the fear of doing base actions, or of becoming impudent.—Drink strengthens the passions, weakens the memory and judgment, and therefore is a severe trial of a man's steadiness. If there was a drink that could make people fearful for a time, it would be worth a legislator's or magistrate's while to exercise his citizens with it, to confirm their courage; and, for the same reason, seeing drink is ready to make people too rash and impudent, he should employ it for the purpose of teaching them prudence, modesty, and self-government.—It is better, at some public entertainment, to discover those minds that are slaves to their lusts, than run the risque of discovering them in private, when they are entrusted with our wives and daughters, and every thing that is dear and valuable to us.

THE happiness of a state depends on good education. He is a happy man who acquires wisdom and right opinions, even in his old age.—Education forms boys habitually to what is right, and reason confirms the good habit as they grow up.—The gods, pitying the laborious condition of the human race, appointed festival-days to be a relaxation from their toil. Apollo, the Muses and Bacchus are given by the gods to assist us in our joy.—Boys are perpetually in motion, hence it becomes a part of education to reduce them to decency by music and dancing. But it is necessary that we examine what kind of melody, song and movement, is proper to be taught ; for we are not to allow our youth to learn any dance or song, but those which tend to promote virtue and decency of behaviour. This is observed nowhere but in Egypt, who though, in other respects, they have many foolish things, they have wisely preserved their antient poetry, without the least variation, these ten thousand

thousand years, *viz.* the poems of Isis; and the same thing is true of their painting. The constant desire of novelty in music corrupts its sacred use.—The excellence of a composition is known by its pleasing, not the multitude, but the wisest and best judges. Such people need both wisdom to chuse aright, and resolution to defend their choice. The populace, being judges of theatrical compositions, has corrupted the poets, whose only aim is to please the people.—As children love mirth, we should instruct them in our poetry, that all the blessings of life are of no value without justice and goodness; and I would punish our poets, if they dared to say that bad men can live happily: and seeing mankind never will act against their pleasure, we should persuade them, that justice and holiness of life constitute true happiness.—A law-giver needs not doubt that he shall be able to persuade people to so noble and rational a purpose, if he considers how many myriads have swallowed absurd stories; such as that Sido-

nian fable of the sown teeth.—By fables therefore, by stories and by songs, we should instruct our youth, and inculcate these sentiments. The first chorus for that purpose, should be of boys; the second, of young men to thirty; the third, of grown men from thirty to sixty years of age. To the third chorus Bacchus comes in as an auxiliary.—No young person is to taste wine before eighteen years of age; he is to be very moderate till thirty, and never to be drunk. After forty they may take a little more liberty with wine. *It makes us, in opinion, renew our youth; it is a remedy against the austerity of old age, and is a temporary suspension of all our miseries.*—In order to determine what music we should allow, let us remember, that every thing that is agreeable either affords a pleasure by itself, or is founded on rectitude, or is useful. But we are not to leave our estimate of pleasure to the chance of capricious fancy, and blind opinion, but determine according to the rules of truth and reason.—No one will deny

ny that music is an imitative art, as well as painting. In judging therefore of any piece, we are to consider, what it is that is attempted to be imitated; 2dly, whether this was a proper subject for imitation; 3dly, whether this imitation itself is properly made in language, melody and measure; and to take care, that effeminate music be not joined to manly sentiments, &c. nor all kinds of sounds crowded injudiciously together, &c.—Those of fifty years, who have been well educated, will be the best judges.—As we allow wine to the more elderly people, to enliven their musical entertainments, we would appoint inspectors over them, men past sixty, who are to be sober, and take care to preserve good order, and prevent all excess. By these means people would part good friends, and quarrels be prevented. So that we are not to reckon wine an evil; nor believe the fable, “That
“ Bacchus, being deprived of his senses by
“ his step-mother, brought in revelling and
“ madness.” Wine, instead of being given

to

to inspire men with madness, was rather given, (according to our system of discipline,) as a medicine to procure modesty in the soul, and health and strength in the body.—Every animal naturally expresses its joy by gesticulations and quick motions; man has a natural sense of time and cadence; music cultivates that sense, and both together produced the chorus and the dance. But of this afterwards.—We shall only add concerning liberal drinking, that we would not approve of it in our city, unless they intended, by that means, to exercise themselves in subduing their passions, and to learn temperance. The Cretan and Lacedemonian laws are too rigid, I rather would prefer the Carthaginian regulation, who allowed no wine in their camp; nor to their men and women slaves; nor to their magistrates that year they had the government.

B O O K III.

THE origin of society and dominion is to be sought for from the remains of mankind,

mankind, after diseases, or deluges, or other calamities, which had almost swept off the whole race.—Thus, after the deluge, some shepherds would be remaining on hill-tops; all champain cities being utterly destroyed, and with them arts; otherwise there could be no new invention in the world; whereas we owe them to Dædalus, Orpheus and Palamedes. Wind-music we owe to Marfyas and Olympus; the harp to Amphion. Epimenides also was an inventor, and performed what Hesiod had conjectured. Metals would not be dug up, till cities were again inhabited; which shews that the arts, which depend on metals, would be long neglected; and people would continue long in innocence and simplicity, in private families, in cells, and clefts of rocks, as Homer says of the Cyclops, who, on mountaintops alone, judged their wives and their children, and had no public council.—The primitive government was that of the father, and so on to his eldest son. But as people increased, they must needs go out of their
dens

dens and labour more ground. This would occasion different families to dwell together for mutual defence, and to hedge themselves round from wild beasts.—This would begin at the foot of mountains. As every family would have its own laws, they would constitute some from the different families to compose one general body of laws, and would appoint certain of the chiefs of the families to see them put in execution. This resembles Homer's description of Dardania, built at the foot of mount Ida, among the streams of a falling river.—Afterwards Troy was built on a fine plain; the sea was navigated, and the Greeks besieged Troy. But several changes happened in Greece by the Trojan war, through the sedition of the youth, who received the returning soldiers unworthily, slew some, and banished the rest, till Doreas brought them back; then they changed their name from Achivi to Dorians.—This army, dividing by consent into three parts, inhabited Argos, Sparta and Mycenæ, making among themselves a solemn

lemn league, which was confirmed by several oracles, particularly that of Delphos.—By these means they thought themselves able to oppose the Assyrian empire, which was founded by Ninus, and had still considerable power; and in confidence of which the Trojans had undertaken that war.—The Greeks having twice destroyed Troy, were afraid of the Assyrians, as we now are of the Persians.—Each of the kings swore to govern his subjects with moderation, and to assist his ally if he was attacked. They settled upon a plan of equality, and an Agrarian law; but Lacedemon is the only one that preserved its old constitution, and ever since it has warred on the other two states.—This misfortune did not happen to those states for want of military skill, but for want of the best of all disciplines; namely, that the desires and affections should be obedient to reason.—Joy and displeasure are the populace in a mental system; for as a state is very unhappy, when the populace are not obedient to the laws, so the soul is most unhappy,

happy, when, though it has fine notions of things, and reasons justly, yet is not at all reformed, but the contrary. We would trust no such man with any share of the government, though he had never so fine a genius, seeing he is ignorant of the most valuable discipline.—Of all the maxims for founding right of government, the most important is, that the wisest should command, *viz.* they, whose opinions are just, and their passions and affections are governed by reason. Hence we may trace the cause of the down-fall of Argos and Mycenæ, and with them the affairs of Greece, to be ignorance of that political maxim of Hesiod, *That the half is more than the whole*; because moderation is always safest.—The power of the royalty at Lacedæmon is diminished, because divided between two. Then the senate of twenty-eight old men is a great balance in the state against the encroachments of regal power; and 3dly the Ephori.—There are two original forms of government, pure royalty and pure democracy; but no state can possibly
be

be quiet and happy where both forms are not mixed.—Originally the Persian despotism was milder than at present, and the Athenian liberty. The Persians were freemen, they obeyed their generals out of love. Cyrus had no invidious dispositions, he was a great encourager of merit; but though he was a great general and lover of his country, he never understood right education, and never applied his mind to the management of his family, but committed his sons to the women and eunuchs to be educated in the Median luxury; so that he having no leisure, on account of continual wars, the boys were spoiled and corrupted entirely. After his death Cambyfes slew his brother. Then out of contempt, for his madness, the Medes and an eunuch slew him. Then the seven and Darius restored the monarchy, for he was not luxuriously brought up, and by gifts, &c. gained the good will of the Persians, and left as much conquered as Cyrus did; but mistook, in the same manner, the education of his son Xerxes, and the error

still continues.—The Persian constitution is erroneous from its too great despotism over the subject; so that when a war happens, the king is weak, though ruling over many myriads of subjects, because they are ill affected.—The error of the Athenian constitution is, that the people have too much liberty; they were indeed quiet and obedient to the laws about the time of the Persian war, but, being freed from danger, they first began to rule and judge in the theatre calmly, but afterwards unreasonably and with noise; and, by degrees, carried this turbulent ruling spirit to every thing else.

BOOK IV.

IT was said at the end of the last book, that the Cretans were about to settle a colony; and it is now observed, that this colony ought not to be too near the sea, lest foreign commerce should introduce vice and dishonesty. The country should produce all fruits necessary for sustenance, but not in such plenty as to occasion exportation.—

Though

Though Minos caused the Athenians to pay a tribute of seven children yearly, it had been better for them to have continued doing so, than to have learned the vices of seamen and their manner of fighting, and have got, instead of a solid land-army, an unstable fleet.—It is true that naval power preserves a state; but it is not merely the preservation of the power of a state, but of its virtue, which we regard.—If your colony consists of people from the same country, it will be difficult to give them laws different from their usual ones; but they will be more apt to live in friendship. If the colony is composed of a promiscuous conflux of people, you may more easily give them new laws; but it will be a long time before they unite together in affection. On this occasion we may observe, *That there are few things that may be said properly to be the work of legislators.* For in the first place the Deity, then chance and the revolution of human affairs, have produced most part of all laws: human art comes only in the third place,

place, wisely to improve occurrences.—It is not easy to compose and give authority to a body of good laws; one way would be successful, *viz.* if at the same time, and in the same state, there was a virtuous, young and brave despotic prince, and a wise legislator. It is a vast happiness to a state, when the princes or the rich and great are devoted to virtue and generous actions, for the people soon follow their example.—It is observed, that the constitutions of Crete and Lacedemon in some respects are tyrannical, in others royal, aristocratical, democratical; because, says the Athenian speaker, these are *really political constitutions*. The others are only cities inhabited, where some one part tyrannizes over the rest.—In the days of Saturn it is fabled, that different deities ruled the societies of men, just as we set keepers over our cattle, not of their own kind, but a nobler.—It is absurd to say, that justice follows power; magistrates are only servants of the laws. That state is the happiest, where they, who have the supreme power, are, of all men,
the

the most obedient to law.—Suppose we had our colonists before us, and should thus bespeak them, “GOD, who possesses the beginning, the middle and end of all things, goes round every where in support of rectitude; and justice follows him as the avenger of the divine law, &c.”—The fundamental and principal duty of man is to resemble GOD as much as possible; so shall we escape his wrath. To this may be subjoined, that it is a necessary duty, and extremely decent for a temperate, good and just man to worship GOD, and sacrifice to him with a pure mind. But from the impure hands of the unjust, it neither becomes GOD nor man to receive a present.—Another great duty is to reverence our parents, and to support and cherish them in their old age, &c.—Our laws should not be delivered by mere authority, but also with conviction. There is one fundamental law, namely, that men should be fineable yearly, for every year they are unmarried after thirty-five.—But he takes notice, that he is as yet only giving the introduction to his laws.

IT has been said, that we ought to honour the gods in the first place; let me add in the second place, that we ought to reverence our own souls. Few there are who do so, though they think they do. If one indulges his mind in vice, that is not honouring the soul, but defiling it. Neither does he honour it who indulges in immoderate pleasure; nor he who flies from pains and toils that are appointed by the laws; nor he who thinks this life the greatest good; or who prefers corporeal beauty or riches to virtue; nor, in fine, he who is not studious, with his whole heart, to obey the laws.—Few advert to that which is the greatest punishment of wickedness, namely, to resemble bad men, and to be separated from the good. The noblest acquisition of the soul is to fly from evil, and chuse that which is best, and dwell with it.—The care of the body comes in the next place. With regard to that, the legislator is not highly to value beauty, strength, riches, swiftness, &c. nor their

their opposites; neither ought people to be anxious to acquire great fortunes to leave their children. They should rather strive to leave them great modesty and temperance. Nor are we to admire the common saying, That children should be respectful and modest before others; for we should also add, That old people ought, above all things, to be modest and respectful in their behaviour before children; for, if old people are impudent, it is impossible that children can be modest. And those gods that a man worships through his life, these will be propitious to him in the procreation of children, &c.—There is another general maxim, namely, That our citizens be hospitable and beneficent to strangers; especially, those who are supplicants and in distress.—That a man may live as happily as possible in this world, let him cultivate truth and fidelity. The same thing is to be said concerning temperance, prudence and other virtues. Let our people rival one another in worth and virtue with the utmost ambition. A man

would need to have a great deal of spirit, and a great deal of good nature. He needs spirit and courage to repel and punish injuries that are incurable, and wisdom and good nature to distinguish those that are curable, and to make allowances for the folly and weakness of men; and to beware that self-love does not deceive him. He who wants to be truly great, will not regard his own interest or reputation, in opposition to truth, rectitude and justice.—Another direction that contributes much to our happiness, is to preserve steadiness and equality of mind; checking extravagant joy, and hoping better things, and trusting in God in time of adversity.—These directions refer to the diviner faculties; we now proceed to those of the inferior order, joy, sorrow, desire. It is the wish of every one to have as much joy in life as possible, and as little sorrow; but how this is to be obtained, must be now inquired. Let us therefore consider the temperate life, the prudent, the brave, the healthful; and oppose to these the impatient,

pudent, the cowardly, the intemperate, the sickly. The temperate life has all its joys and sorrows, its desires and aversions moderate. The intemperate one the contrary; so that its sorrows greatly exceed its joys. Hence it is manifest, that the multitude of mankind do not live intemperately, but from ignorance, or want of self-government. Thus also a life of courage is better than cowardice, and wisdom than folly.—Where a state is once otherwise settled, it is vain to attempt an Agrarian law. We shall lay it down in words; at least, as a fundamental maxim of our state, that they must neither be unjust nor covetous.—When we are now founding a state, we ought to determine the greatness of it, so as to be sufficient for self-defence with regard to surrounding states; but for conveniency of the number, we shall suppose it to consist of 5040 citizens, and the land divided into the same number of parts. That number is most convenient, which consists of a great number of aliquot parts; thus 5040 can be divided into fifty-nine parts,

and no more.—A legislator is not to alter any thing, that has been already established, with regard to religion; but endeavour that the people of the state, assembling at their religious festivals, and entertaining one another, may become acquainted together, and promote mutual good will. The most perfect form of a state is that where all things are common, and private property of all kinds extinguished out of life; but as these things are above the pitch of humanity, we allow private property and a division of lands, only the number of citizens must never be greater or less. So that the estate is to be left to one son only, and the super-numerary citizens sent off in a colony.—No private person is to acquire possessions of gold or silver, but to use a certain coin for daily exchange and pay of workmen, &c. and the common coin of Greece is to serve for wars and other public demands. One who is allowed to travel, carries this public coin with him, and when he returns, gives back to the public treasury what he has not spent. No
interest

interest is to be taken for money.—One endowed with true political knowledge will not study that alone which the vulgar think most of, *viz.* to render his state as great and rich and powerful as possible; he would also add, that it may become as good as possible, and as happy. But that they should be excessively rich and very good, at the same time, is impossible.—Because there will be some people richer than others, we would institute four ranks of valuation; and let the taxes be laid on proportionally.—The lowest rank are to have what may be sufficient to raise them above poverty; the 2d rank double; the 3d triple; but no degree of riches is to exceed four times that quantity. What exceeds this valuation is to be given to the state.—Then follow general directions about dividing the land into twelve parts, and the people into twelve tribes.—But it may be objected, that no people will submit to these regulations, &c. as for these things, says he, do not, my friends, imagine I am ignorant, that they are

are in a great measure true. But with regard to future possibilities, I think that it is best to represent the standard, such as the thing projected ought to be, without being defective either in truth or beauty, &c. Allow the legislator to finish his plan, and then, along with him, examine what is beneficial in it, or the contrary, &c.—In œconomics, in politics and all the arts, nothing is so extensively useful as the knowledge of numbers; for they sharpen the mind, &c. Only take care that your citizens be free from avarice and fordid dispositions; otherwise this knowledge may become subservient to frauds and artifice, as in Egypt and Phœnicia. Whether it be that those people have had a bad legislator; or some unfortunate accident has corrupted them; or there is something peculiar in their nature: for we are not to think that all countries are equally capable of the same sort of discipline.—*A prudent legislator will regard the diversity of the characters of mankind arising from the difference of the soil and climate.*

BOOK VI.

WE proceed next to the appointment of supreme magistrates; observing in general, that unless these are properly chosen, the best system of laws will be soon destroyed. And as this colony which the Cnossians are going to plant, is supposed to be made up of people collected from all the states of Greece, it would be dangerous to trust the government at first entirely into their own hands. Therefore let nineteen be chosen from among them, and eighteen from among the Cnossians, and in process of time, and after this colony is sufficiently established, leave them to chuse their magistrates entirely from among themselves. After the magistrates, chuse generals and other officers for the army. Then follows the election of priests, and order of their service. Then managers of the public roads, buildings, harbours, &c. Then directors of the education of the youth are to be chosen, which is the most important of all offices. We call man a tame animal, and indeed he
is

is the tamest and most divine of all animals, if he gets proper education, but one of the wildest if he does not. These inspectors of education are to be chosen in the most solemn way, and by ballot, &c.—Then judges are to be chosen to decide in controversies among the citizens, &c. It now remains that we proceed to the laws by which this state is to be governed. But we must observe, that no one system of laws can be perfect. Time and experience necessarily produce improvements; and as legislators are mortal, the rulers of the state should always keep before them the spirit and intention of the original legislators, to wit, that the citizens may become as good and virtuous as possible.—In our state we should promote general acquaintance, that people may know whom, and with whom they marry; for this purpose there should be processions of the youth and girls, both as much naked as is consistent with the rules of decency and modesty.—One ought not to chuse a woman too rich, but rather below himself in fortune.

He

He should also chuse one whose temper and accomplishments compensate for his failings. Let no more than ten be present at the marriage, viz. five of each side; and the marriage expence for people of the highest valuation, not exceed 3 l. 4 s. 7 d. and proportionally for those below that rank. Take care not to drink to excess; and through the whole time of matrimony be temperate and sober, that the childrens bodies or their minds be not corrupted through your fault.—With regard to slaves, it is difficult to determine concerning them. People have differed much in their opinions and behaviour to slaves; and their frequent rebellions show them to be a dangerous possession. To obviate these evils, let not your slaves be all of the same country. Do not insult them; and, if possible, injure them less than your equal. This is a good rule for all superiors. Do not reason with your slaves, for that makes them saucy; your words must always be commands. Never jest with your slaves, male or female, as many have impru-

L 1

dently

dently done, and given themselves great trouble to govern them.—Orpheus did not eat any thing but the fruits of the earth. Of old it was reckoned impious to slay animals and eat them, or to stain the altars of the gods with blood. They offered incense and fruits dipped in honey.—Then he proceeds to give regulations concerning the houses and public buildings. On this occasion he mentions the *sleeping of the walls*, which Longinus justly censures; but Plato appears plainly referring to some noted phrase of the Lacedemonians, when they opposed the rebuilding of the walls of Athens.—After the men are married, they should still continue to eat in public, as the Lacedemonians and Cretans have divinely instituted; but, says he, your legislator omitted to appoint the same regulation for the women. They naturally are more subtle and politic than men, on account of their weakness, and are worse to govern; therefore your legislator stopt short in his regulations, but in this he did wrong. This neglect

neglect has been the occasion of several misfortunes in your affairs; for it is not merely the half that is omitted when the women are neglected in your plan of discipline: but by how much the female nature is less susceptible of virtue * than the male, by just so much the neglect is more than the half. You ought therefore to resume and rectify this matter in your state, and appoint the same employments both to the men and women.—In any other state this would be impossible; for the sex being used to an obscure and cowardly manner of life, they would exclaim against the legislator, and repel him when he attempted to drag them out into the light.—To this are subjoined farther directions for the good behaviour of married people: and the man or woman to be punished, if they are guilty of infidelity to one another. A woman is allowed to be capable of some public offices at forty, and the men at thirty years of age.

L 1 2

BOOK VII.

* The original word for virtue here, signifies principally the manly virtues; such as courage, &c.

THE careful and regular education of children is necessary; *because if people are habituated from their infancy, to transgress the laws in small matters, they will be more apt to transgress them in important cases, when they grow up.*—In the first place we should take care to promote the health and strength of their bodies from their earliest years, by almost perpetual motion, which is useful both for the young body and young mind, to sooth them when they are disturbed or in terrors, and divert their attention. Thus nurses shake and lull their little ones to sleep with a drowsy song.—A good or bad temper is very important in the human character. Early luxury makes children proud, wrathful, peevish; too much harshness depresses the mind.—Children under three years of age always express their wants by squalls, and cries, and noise; but it should be our study to prevent these excessive commotions of their minds by all means possible: and even their mothers, when they are with child,

child, should avoid all great emotions of joy or grief.—Early education, as a proper basis, renders written laws solid and lasting; but wanting this foundation, they soon must fall to ruin.—From three years old to six children are not to be indulged, but chastised with decency, that they may not hate the chastiser, nor be allowed to live at random, and become insolent, &c. At six years old the boys and girls are to be separated.—The boys go to learn horsemanship, archery, slinging, darting; and even the women ought to learn the use of arms.—They are to be accustomed to use both hands equally, as the Scythians have ordered by law concerning the use of the bow.—Those parts of education which concern the body are called *gymnastical*; those relative to the mind, *musical*: of the gymnastic there are two kinds, dancing and wrestling. *Dancing*, with proper music, to give a becoming dignity of gesture, and easy motion.—*Wrestling*, upon the principles of Anteus, for an useless contention; or boxing, like Epeus or Amycus,

cus, we would disregard, as being useless in war. But wrestling with a decent emulation, for the improvement of health and strength, we would encourage. But we have not yet finished the musical part of education. Though it is bold, yet I shall venture to affirm, that the perpetual novelty of public diversions tends much to corrupt the minds of a people, and to make them lose respect for old and wise laws.—Changes in all things are dangerous, except in evils; thus changes of seasons, of diet, &c.—Good laws, happily long established, impress the mind with reverence. Legislators should cultivate this disposition. But I observe, that they consider the diversions of young people to be merely *diversions*, and not that the greatest mischiefs may arise from them. For new diversions tend to form the young mind into new characters, and make them a different sort of men; and whenever that happens, they will wish for new laws. All the dancing and music in Egypt is sacred, and not allowed to be changed. Neither would

we

we allow any change from what is established by law. Again, we would not allow any poet to determine what is just or honourable, in contradiction to the laws of the state. If people are educated in regular and sober music and poetry, they will despise the opposite kind as illiberal; but those accustomed to the vulgar kind of music will think the other sort harsh and unaffecting: such is the force of habit.—Music for the men should tend to inspire magnanimity; music for the women should incline to elegance and modesty.—Human affairs are not worth much pains; and yet we are obliged to undergo cares, which is a misfortune. Care and divine providence, is worthy of GOD; but man, who seems to be formed by the gods in sport, it becomes him to follow the most innocent and honourable diversions, through his whole life. Men now take toil to procure pleasure, but we would have our diversions, in time of peace, so conducted, as to render the gods propitious to us, and enable us to repel our enemies in war.—Man is, for the most part,

part, a wonderful sort of animal, and obtains but a small share of truth. You depress the human kind prodigiously.—Do not wonder, but forgive me, O Megillus, for when I consider the divine nature, being affected by it, I have said these things: however, if you please, we shall suppose the human race important.—Idleness is hurtful, and therefore by all means people should be busy. Masters and mistresses should rise early in the morning to direct their families, and magistrates to manage the concerns of the public.—Boys are the worst to tame of all wild beasts, and much need a governor; the more natural abilities they have, they are the more ready to be intriguing, obstinate and insolent: so that they need to be bound up with many bridles.—From ten to thirteen they learn to read and write; at thirteen touch the lyre, and continue in this class of studies three years more. There are a great many compositions both in prose and verse, which it would not be safe to teach the youth without distinction, as some
parts

parts are good, some bad. The best system I know of is this one which we have been composing since the morning, not without the assistance of some divinity, as I believe, and very much resembling a certain kind of poem.—The musical teacher ought to make the sounds consonant to the sense, and take care not to puzzle the youth with the intricacies of music in that short time he has to study.—Let the boys have masters and the girls mistresses to teach them dancing.—The women should learn the use of arms, if it were for no more but to guard the city, when at any time necessity requires all the men to take the field. Birds will fight for their young against the fiercest wild beasts, but women run away in crouds, and fill all the temples and altars; so that one would think the human species the most cowardly of all animals.—Of dances there are two sorts, the serious and the comical. The serious kind again is two fold, the *war-dance* to imitate fighting. The *peaceful-dance* must be considered. There are the dances of

noqu

M m

Bacchanals,

Bacchanals, of Pans and Nymphs and Satyrs, for purifications and mysteries; so that one cannot define their nature nor their meaning. Where they are established, let them alone. The decent peaceful dance is that which is proper to be used at the festivals of the gods. This sort of dance, and its corresponding song, are never to be changed.— We must allow the imitation of foolish characters in the comic dance and song, that people may learn wisdom by seeing contraries. These are to be acted by slaves only, or hired strangers; and there must always be something new in the entertainment. Let no free person presume to imitate them. Thus far concerning comedy. When the tragic poets come and ask leave to represent their pieces, we would answer, O ye best of strangers, we ourselves are tragic poets; our whole republic is constituted in imitation of the best and finest life, which, we say, is the truest tragedy. You are poets, and we your rival artists; rivals in contriving the most beautiful drama: for which we depend upon

upon our laws. Do not therefore imagine, we can readily allow you to set up scenes in our market-place, and hire loud-voiced actors to declaim before our wives and children, or before the multitude; and, perhaps, inculcate sentiments different or contradictory to those which our laws inspire. Wherefore, O ye children of the soft muses, show your performances to the magistrates. If they are found to be better than ours, we shall give you a chorus.—There are three parts of liberal education yet further necessary to be taught, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy. The youth should learn arithmetic at first, in play, as they do in Egypt. After this learn them to measure breadth and length and solids; a thing in which all men are naturally liable to commit so great mistakes, that one would blush for the human kind. As for astronomy, it is strange, that any one should call it impious to enquire into the nature of the universe; on the contrary, by studying astronomy, we would do more justice to the gods; and be sensible, that

all their motions are regular, &c.—The regulations for hunting are, “That it promote health and vigour, of body and mind.”

B O O K VIII.

THE best means by which a state can live in peace, is to be virtuous and good. If it is vicious, there must be wars both abroad and at home.—Our state should exercise both the men and women, one day each month, and imitate all the operations of war; and those who behave well, are to be praised by the poets. But the poet must be past fifty years of age, and eminent himself for good actions. No one must be allowed to publish his poems without consent of the magistrates, though they were finer than the hymns of Thamyras and Orpheus.—It is not from the ignorance of legislators, that such laws as these were never given to any state. But in the first place, from the unbounded love of money and private gain, which governs the world; so that
people

people of quiet characters follow the arts of merchandize, trade and service. The bolder sort become robbers, house-breakers, bullies and tyrants. Some are forced to these through poverty. Another cause is the imperfect forms of government, democracy, oligarchy, or the absolute power of one; which are not *governments*, but systems of sedition. These errors we have endeavoured to avoid.—Then follow rules concerning the gymnastic diversions, running, boxing, &c.—It is objected here; what must be done with such a state as this, where the young people are to be well fed, to toil in no severe and servile work, but are always employed at sacred festivals and other such diversions? how can you restrain such a people from many irregular desires and pernicious passions, which reason condemns, and the laws forbid? In answer to this, he says, That a great deal depends upon his excluding riches. 2dly, The constant presence of the magistrates, which is appointed by the law, will restrain the youth. But how shall

we

we restrain the irregular passions of boys and girls? It is difficult. The institutions of Crete and Lacedemon have been useful to us, in many instances, where our laws have contradicted the prevailing manners; but they totally disappoint us here.—To remedy this evil, our laws should be contrived to inspire dignity of sentiments, temperance, and a disposition to virtuous friendship, not impure love: another useful mean would be, to have it esteemed an impious crime by all ranks and ages: thus, from the general conviction of the world, incest is almost never committed. Then inspire our youth with those sentiments, that the conquest of their passions is the most glorious of all victories. The wrestlers and runners at the Olympic games have been famous for temperance, and will not our youth be temperate for a victory far more glorious?—Then follow regulations for the affairs of husbandry and the markets, &c.

BOOK IX.

THE first law is against sacrilege.—The introduction to this law is solemn.—The second law is against sedition, and attempting to overturn the government. The punishment death. But no children to suffer for their father's crime, unless the father, grand-father and great grand-father have been guilty of the same.—The thief must repay double of what he stole, whether it be small or great.—Here there is a curious digression distinguishing the nature of damages, injuries, and voluntary and involuntary faults; because a legislator is not to prescribe laws merely from mechanical custom, but upon rational principles: his aim being always to rectify the dispositions of mankind, and make them love justice, and put the incurable to death.—There are three sources of transgression, *wrath, love of pleasure, ignorance*. Ignorance again is two-fold, *simple ignorance*, or mistaken opinion and fond conceit. The faults proceeding from the first of these, are like

like the errors of children; those from the second, dangerous and extravagant.—When one kills another involuntarily, he is to be acquitted; but ought to undergo certain purifications and penalties, to be appointed by the directors in sacred matters. This also to be the case when he kills his own slave. When one in a fit of passion beats another that he dies of it, the punishment ought not to be death; neither ought it to be the punishment when he kills another in a fit of anger, without any previous design: nor even when one, in a sudden fit of anger, kills another designedly. But it is difficult to enact precise laws concerning these things. The judges ought to determine according to circumstances.—If one murders another premeditatedly, he must die. The same punishment takes place, if one plots the death of another, though he did it not with his own hands.—If a slave kills a free man designedly, he is to die with severity. If a free man kills a slave out of fear, lest he should inform against him for some wicked action,

action, he ought to die as if he had killed a free man.—If any one happens to be so wretched, as willingly to kill father, or mother, or brother, or child, let all people, who bear any office in the city, stone him to death, and let his dead body be cast out of the country unburied.—If one kills a thief, attempting to break into his house at night, he is free. The same is the law, if one is killed, when attempting a rape.—The laws in the next place should be made with respect to wounds and maiming. These are to follow the same principles with those above. Equitable laws, for the good of the whole, are the bond of society. If one man had absolute power, and yet ruled constantly for the public good, that man ought to be confined by no laws. But as no such man can be found, we must have recourse to laws and regulations, which inspect and regulate many, but cannot possibly reach all things. Some things therefore must be left to tribunals; and others restricted by the law. Where tribunals judge in secret, and

N n

conceal

conceal their opinions, and much more where tribunals judge with noise and clamour; this is a great misfortune to a state. By all means, as few cases as possible ought to be left to the judgment of such tribunals.—If one is found to have intended murder, and has only wounded a man, he ought not to suffer death; because, seeing Providence has saved him from the greatest of calamities, we also should incline to mercy. But let him make reparation for the damage, and be banished for ever.—Where any family loses its representative, through the misfortune of perpetual banishment, on whatever account, that family is first to be purified; then the guardians of the laws and the friends are to meet, and chuse out of some worthy family, where there are many sons, one of the best whom they are to pray over, and deliver to that desolate family for its support, to perform all the sacred duties of a son, an heir, and a relation.—Then follow particular laws, in the cases of wounds and insults, to the end of the book.

BOOK X.

THE first law is against neglecting the gods; which proceeds either from a belief that they are not, or that they do not care for human affairs; or may be easily prevailed upon by sacrifices and prayers.—According to the atheistical principles, there are three sources of all things, *nature, chance, art*; nature and chance made the grand parts; art arose much later, and does but small things, and is mortal. They also say, That justice and honour are the creatures of art, not of nature; and that right is founded in power. Thus they pretend to wisdom and philosophy.—What should a law-giver do in such a case? should he only threaten such people, or should he also persuade? He certainly should persuade with patience.—O my son, you are yet a young man; time will make you change your opinion of many things. No one ever continued an atheist from youth to old age; some indeed have continued to deny a providence, and others who acknowledged providence have fancied,

that the gods are easily persuaded by sacrifices and prayers, &c. but be not you rash to form impious opinions. Hearken to other people's reasoning, but especially to your legislator. The fundamental error of atheism is, That mind existed posterior to matter.—If mind existed anterior to matter, are not art, thought and law, prior to hardness, softness, levity and gravity, &c.?—They use the word *nature* improperly; for if mind is elder than air and fire, mind is the cause of all, &c.—Bodies, once in motion, can move other bodies, but have no power of moving themselves; mind can move itself and all things, &c.—But the mover is superior to that which is moved; therefore mind is prior.—If we see the heavenly motions regular, we must believe that a mind governs them; for they do not move without stated laws, &c.—That the gods take care of human affairs, we may be convinced by considering what are those qualities which we esteem in any mind; whether do we esteem negligence, idleness and luxury, or the contrary?

trary? Hence we ought not to think that these are the character of God.—Again, we are not to think that the gods take care of great things, such as the heavenly bodies, and neglect men. A physician must not neglect the smaller parts, nor the general of an army, nor a pilot; and masons will tell you, that small stones make the great ones lay right.—Neither can the gods be intreated to favour vice; for, let us compare small things with great, would the pilot of a ship act in this manner? or a charioteer, or a husbandman?—They say, the gods become friends to wicked men, when they consecrate a part of their plunder; as if one should say, That dogs let the wolves destroy the sheep, that they may get a share of the prey. What kind of pilot would you think him, who could be soothed by libations of wine and the smell of fat, to let you sink the vessel and drown the passengers, &c.?—The law concerning atheism is: If it proceeds from folly, and if they are otherwise quiet harmless people, let them be imprisoned, at least
five

five years, and none but sober persons converse with them. If they are not thus cured, let them die.—Another sort of atheists are they who laugh at oaths, and all regard to justice and honesty: a people of the most abandoned characters, and very apt to corrupt others; many of whom become soothsayers and prophets, and are ready for any artful undertaking; sometimes they become despotic and tyrannical rulers, or demagogues and leaders of a popular faction; or captious and deceitful philosophers.—They are worthy of many deaths.—*They, again, who cheat private persons and families, and even states out of their money, professing to appease the wrath of the gods by prayers, sacrifices and songs; and that they can charm the souls of the dead,*—“Let them be imprisoned till they die.”—The concluding law in these matters is, “Let no one keep a private chapel in his house.”—It is not safe to allow any one to consecrate places whenever he has a mind.—It is much the custom of women, and of people who are sick and
in

in danger; or when they meet with good fortune, to consecrate whatever is at hand, and vow sacrifices and promise temples to the gods and dæmons.—When they are troubled with spectres, and awaken out of their dreams in a fright, and want to quiet their visions; they raise up altars and chapels, and fill private houses and villages with them.—To prevent these superstitions, and the use that artful people make of them, he repeats the above law.

BOOK XI.

CONTAINS regulations concerning mutual transactions.—A treasure found.—A depositum.—The duty of freed men.—Buying and selling in the markets.—Inns.—Artificers.—Testaments.—People on their death-beds sometimes dispose of their goods capriciously; and law-givers have been too indulgent to them.—They lose their temper, and cry out, “O ye gods, may we not give our own to whom we please?”—But we would reply, “O friends, who are to live but
one

one day, it is difficult for you to know what is your own, as well as to know your own selves. I, therefore, being your legislator, determine, that neither are ye your own property, nor these your possessions; but both belong to your race that has gone before, and follows; and therefore I will not give my consent, though people by their officiousness in your sickness, or old age, should coax and persuade you to do what is not just. Do not you take it amiss, but go peaceably the common road of all men, and we will take care of your affairs for the good of your friends and of the state, &c."—Then concerning the care of orphans, who are the most sacred depositum.—Of disinheriting.—Dotage.—Divorce.—Children born of slaves.—Concerning the honour of our parents. Some of the gods whom we see we worship; we make images for others, and think when we adorn them, that the immortals will be much pleased. But whoever has a father or mother, or grand-father or grand-mother, decayed with old age, laid up
in

in his house; let no man ever think he can have a more valuable image in his house than these, if he rightly reverences them: when we put respect upon them, God is pleased with the honour. They are images far excelling inanimate ones, &c.—Concerning mortal poisons has been already said; those not mortal, either hurt the health mechanically, or are composed by spells and charms.—A physician is to be punished with death, if he gives the first sort; and an augur, if he gives the second.—It is no easy matter to persuade people that this second sort are of no real virtue, and therefore they must be prohibited, that the apprehensions of them may not disturb the vulgar.—*Punishments are not for the sake of hurting, but to inspire a hatred of injustice for the future, in the actor and spectators, or to lessen the degree of it; at which every good law-giver ought to aim.*—The friends of mad people ought to take care of them. Some people become mad by diseases; others from rage, being naturally of a bad temper, and

O o

having

having got a wrong education : such people are ready, upon the smallest injury, to fall a railing : but the laws of our state allow of no such thing. No one ever does so who does not either entirely deviate from the dignity of his character, or diminish a good deal the dignity of his own mind, &c.—Shall we then allow the inclination of comedians to say ridiculous things of men ? or shall we allow our citizens to say ridiculous things of one another, providing it is not in wrath ? By no means.—Comedians, and all jambic and other verse-writers, are in no shape to ridicule any of our citizens.—A private person who attempts any such thing for diversion and in good humour, let him first show it to the general inspector of the youth ; if he approves, let it see the light ; if not, let no mortal ever know of it.—Then beggars ;—Injuries done by slaves or cattle ;—Concerning oaths before courts of justice ;—Against pleading of causes for money, by way of trade, whether they are right or wrong.

BOOK XII.

OUR ambassadors or heralds ought to be severely punished if they are unfaithful.—Theft is mean; rapine impudent; none of the sons of Jove could be guilty of these, though poets and fable-writers say so. Theft, of great or small things, to be punished equally; a stranger or a slave, may be considered as curable; but a citizen, who has got good education, as incurable suffers death.—In expeditions the fundamental regulation is, “Always act, both in peace and war, as considering yourself under a commander; never live as a separate being, but always, as much as possible, live for the public, &c.” Accusations for cowardice should be cautiously made, and on sure grounds.—Justice is compared to a modest virgin; justice and modesty abhor falsehood, especially, in that most important of all accusations, what concerns a man’s military reputation.—Had Patroclus been carried back alive to Achilles’s tent without his arms, an invidious person might have accused him; many

such cases may happen where there is no crime.—Let this be the law, “The man who is convicted to have thrown away his arms basely, let him never serve again.”—It will be hard to find inspectors of the public management who are better men than the magistrates; if such could be found, it would make the state happy: but if the public management is not fairly examined, this fills the state with sedition, and soon destroys it.—Then he gives regulations for choosing censors, who are to judge every order of magistracy. “Let these be the only people crowned with laurel in the city; let the priests of Apollo and the Sun be chosen out of them only; let one of them be high priest, and the year named from him, for measuring time; and let them be honoured after their death.”—In the days of Radermanthus people universally believed that there were gods; so that he quickly decided controversies by the oath of parties. But now some people do not believe that there are gods; others, that they do not care for human

human affairs; or that they may be soothed to your purpose by sacrifices. As circumstances change, the legislator must change his laws.—It is a terrible thing in a state where there are many oaths; and people are obliged to live in society together, and one half of them are perjured.—Then he gives regulations for avoiding these evils. In this state, where they seek not after money, nor trade, nor travels, what are they to do concerning the reception of strangers? A mixture of foreigners brings in new customs, and a love of novelty, which will be most pernicious; but, in a state badly regulated, no matter how many strangers they admit. But others may blame us for inhospitality and infociality; and it is an affair of consequence whether others should think us a good or bad people. Mankind deviate more from rectitude of manners in their own characters, than they deviate from rectitude of sentiments in judging of others. People therefore are to be sent to the Olympic games, &c. such as may do most honour to the

the

the state: some also are to be allowed to travel; for there are men of great merit, though few, even in the most corrupted state, whose friendship is valuable, and from whom you may collect many things for the improvement of your own laws; and without such care no state can remain perfect. When he returns, let our traveller inform those magistrates who are appointed inspectors of the laws, &c.—Of strangers, who may come to our city, there are four sorts the first resemble birds of passage, they who come at certain seasons for merchandize; “let them be entertained without the city.” The 2d sort spectators, who desire to be acquainted with the productions of the muses; “let them be received with great hospitality.” The 3d kind such as come with any public character from a neighbouring state. The 4th kind, who come but rarely, if they are past fifty, and intend to observe what is good in other states, and communicate their observations; “are to be received with distinguished honour.” In
this

this manner are we to behave toward strangers, and not expel them by meats, sacrifices, and harsh proclamations, as the brutes of the Nile at present do.—Next follow regulations for sureties;—searching for goods;—against detention of witnesses;—or detaining a candidate from the public exercises;—against resetting;—no man is to serve his country for rewards.—A man, in the middle station of life, ought to consecrate moderately to the gods: “The whole earth is sacred to all the gods; let no one therefore pretend again to consecrate what is holy.” Gold and silver, either in temples or in private, is an invidious possession. Ivory, taken from a dead animal, is not decent. Brass and iron are the instruments of war: “Therefore let any one who has a mind consecrate pure wood or stone in the public temples; of woven work, consecrate no more than a woman can weave in a day, and be the colour white: the most divine oblations are birds and pictures, such as one painter can finish in a day.”—Then concerning judges to determine

terminate controversies in private cases.---The regulations which wise legislators have already made, are to be followed with those proper improvements and corrections which the trial of time and experience suggests.---If the laws are rightly constituted, they are the most effectual means of making people better ; and they serve as an antidote against vicious writings and other evils, by confirming the good, by restraining and curing the wicked as much as possible, and appointing death to the incurable.—Burials are to be made in the most useless spot of ground ; and no more earth to be raised over the grave than five men can make in five days. No tomb-stone must be larger than what can contain the epitaph, which is not to exceed four lines of heroic. We ought to believe that the soul is superior to the body ; that, while we are here, it is the soul that acts, and the body follows it ; when we die, the body is only to be considered as a sort of image of the dead : and that the really existent part of us flies away among the gods, to give an
account

account of its actions; an event full of joy to the good, but very dreadful to the wicked. You can do no good to the dead; you should rather have sought their good while they lived, that they might have been as holy and just as possible; that after this life they might escape the punishments for evil.—Then follow regulations for the expence of funerals.—No public lamentations.—The dead body must not be carried publickly through the street, but carried out of town early in the morning.—Thus the plan is finished.—What next remains, is to preserve these constitutions unaltered.—The censors will be useful for this purpose; but the great spring of all is to have one fixt scheme of just politics in view. No wonder that for want of this, the constitutions of states are so erroneous.—The end that our constitution has in view is virtue.—Let no man be a guardian of the constitution and the laws, who has not been at pains to understand what concerns the gods, and who is not of a religious turn of mind.—No man

P p

who

who views the motions of the stars, &c. with any tolerable judgment and attention, can be an atheist.—Some, who formerly examined these things, considering the wonderful regularity and nice proportions in the heavenly motions, were obliged to ascribe them to mind and intelligence; yet they contradicted themselves, by saying, that mind was posterior to matter.—What was before their eyes on earth, they supposed also carried round in the heavens, and imagined, that stones and earth, and other inanimate bodies, regulated the causes of all things. Hence philosophers were reckoned atheists, and hence the reproaches of poets, who compared them to dogs barking at the moon; nevertheless, the study of astronomy does not promote atheism, but quite the contrary.—It is impossible that any mortal can be truly pious, who is not convinced of these two things, “That the soul is the eldest of all things that are produced, and is immortal, and rules all bodies.” In the second place, “That there is a mind in the stars;

stars; at the same time he must be trained in other parts of liberal education subservient to this knowledge and to virtue." He who is unacquainted with these is not fit to be a supreme magistrate.

The E P I N O M I S.

WE proposed to inquire, by what means man shall become wise.—Few are happy in this world; life is short and full of trouble; so that no person, who is not full of childish conceit, would desire to live the same life over again.—Let us first consider those arts which cannot make a man wise. They who, as the fable says, diverted mankind from feeding on human flesh, we wish them well. The invention of bread was useful; but it does not make a man wise. The same may be said of mechanic arts; as also painting, military skill, medicine, navigation, eloquence, and acuteness of genius for learning. Again, let us consider that science, which, if it is wanting in the mind, man becomes a very foolish animal. It is

the science of numbers. Who is the God that taught us? The Heavens. Take away the knowledge of numbers, you take away reasoning, and all the arts are destroyed. God at first implanted in us the faculty of discerning numbers, when they are shown, and shows them; of these, what is more simple and beautiful than the luminary of the day, and in its turn the night, which the revolving heavens incessantly repeat, that the most ignorant may learn to number. It is more difficult to compare numbers with one another; for this purpose God appointed the waxing and waning of the moon, and adjusted months to the year, training us to compare number with number by a very happy art. Hence the earth becomes enriched and pregnant with fruits for the maintenance of animals.—In our inquiry concerning laws, we were then, and still are of opinion, that all other studies are not very difficult; but that one, “*To know by what means mankind may become good, is extremely difficult.*” All agree, that the soul should

should be just, temperate, brave and also wise; but they have not agreed what is the kind of wisdom.—It is necessary to give a better account of the origin of gods and animals, than has been done hitherto, and finish my discourse against the impious, when I affirmed, that there are gods who take care of all things, small and great; and that they are inflexible in the cause of Justice. Also, *That mind is elder than matter*; and the mover, than that which is moved. Thus have we laid a better foundation for wisdom, in the most important of all things, those which concern the gods.—Soul and body joined in one, constitute an animal. There are five original solid bodies. All mind is of one form, and moves and fashions all bodies. The five bodies are, fire, water, air, earth and æther. Out of earth are formed men, animals and plants; we must however observe, that in all these there are parts of the other elements also mixed, but the predominant part is earth. The celestial animals are chiefly composed
of

of fire. The motions of the celestial animals are regular, which shows them to be endued with wisdom.—That the heavenly bodies are animated, we may believe, considering their vast bulk, which can be fully demonstrated; for instance, that the sun is much bigger than the earth; and that all the stars are wonderfully great. How are those vast masses carried for ever regularly round? GOD is the cause.—Let us affirm *one true speech* concerning them all. It is impossible *that the earth*, and the heavens, and the stars, and all those vast bodies, should move round every year so accurately, and preserve the order of days and months, and produce all those good things to us, if there was not a soul present with each of them, or in each of them. The more contemptible beings we ourselves are, the more should we be afraid of talking insignificantly on these subjects. To say, that natures, propensities, and the like, are the causes of them, is to say nothing. There are only two sorts of being, mind and body;
and

and there is no medium kind.—We must either say, that these stars are gods, or images formed by the gods, which we ought to honour beyond all other images; being more beautiful, and more common to all mankind, and established in the purest and noblest situation. Mind forms animals of different kinds, from fire, water, air, æther; *so that it is probable the whole heavens are full of animals.* Let one determine concerning Jupiter and Juno, and the rest of them, as he has a mind; but let him retain this as a fundamental principle.—Then he describes the different sorts of dæmons and demigods, and says, that a legislator, who has the smallest share of prudence, will not venture upon innovations concerning them, nor prohibit those sacrifices that are prescribed by the laws of his country, “seeing he knows nothing at all about those matters.”—There are eight visible powers, one of the sun, one of the moon, one of the stars; and there are five others. We must not imagine, that some of these are gods, and others
not;

not; but affirm, that they are brothers, and in fraternal stations, going round their orbits in stated times, fulfilling that beautiful order of the universe which is established by divine reason. Happy is the man who admires these things, and eagerly desires to know them, as far as mortal nature is capable; and who, being *really initiated*, passes the rest of his life in contemplating the most beautiful objects.—We have already named three of those powers; the fourth and fifth keep pace with the sun; one of them is the morning-star, and is called *Venus*. We have no name for the other, who is nearest the sun, because he is not known; for they were barbarians who first observed the heavens, having great advantages for astronomy in the fineness of their summer seasons, free from clouds and rain. Such is the clime of Egypt and Syria, from whence those sciences came to us confirmed by a long series of observations. There are three orbits more to name, the eight is what may be called *the upper world*, as it appears to men who

who know little about these things. The slowest of the remaining planets is Saturn, the next Jupiter, the third Mars, whose colour is the reddest of all.—The gods, surely, will not be offended at us when we study astronomy; for seeing they have given us the power of understanding, they never can envy us when we know.—We need not hesitate to affirm, that a good man is wise; I have therefore said what is above, to set people right in the practice of the greatest virtue; *for there is not a virtue more becoming the human kind than piety.*—Then he concludes with describing the sciences previously necessary to the successful studying of astronomy. He seems all along to hint at the true system of the heavens; and concludes his directions with saying, that he who studies, ought always to consider *One*; and that *One* will appear to be the bond of all.

T I M Æ U S.

A SYSTEM of natural philosophy, according to the Pythagoreans. Plato gives us a paraphrase of this book; the original is still preserved, and seems to have been sent to Plato from Italy, by his friend Archytas.—It has been already observed, that Plato had no desire or expectation that this book should be considered as a standard in natural philosophy; otherwise, he would not have regreted, that so little of nature was known. Whereas Des Cartes boasted, on the contrary, that his principles could account for more phænomena than actually were in nature.—Plato candidly invites any one to make improvements; and says, he gives that account, because he knew of nothing better.—The Pythagoreans used to describe the motions and distances of the heavenly bodies by analogies of numbers and figures; the precise meaning

208 MIT 20

meaning of which cannot now be positively determined. But as the astronomy of those days was unavoidably imperfect, we may believe, that many of those analogies would not be found verified in nature, though we understood them.—They were determined to this allegorical method of expression to avoid persecution from bigots, and the impertinence and contradictions of the ignorant. We are told, that this very consideration had once almost determined Copernicus to deliver his system in the same manner.—Neither in the *Timæus*, nor at the conclusion of his laws, does Plato explain himself compleatly; but declares, that the truth can be discovered only after long study, and great knowledge of geometry. It is also said, that Plato in his old age repented, that he made the earth the centre of the system.—But the doctrines of the Pythagoreans were not always delivered mysteriously. Aristarchus the Samian published that system without disguise, Aristotle also mentions it. To the discovery

of those principles we owe the Copernican system.—Several learned men have explained the Pythagorean allegory of the harmony of the spheres.—“The force of gravitation toward the sun being inversely as the square of the distance; it follows, that a planet, at half the distance of another from the sun, is acted upon by a quadruple gravity. A musical chord, double in length of another, must be stretched with a quadruple force, in order to make it sound the same note. And therefore, if we should suppose musical chords extended from the sun to each of the planets, they would all sound the same note, if they were respectively stretched with forces sufficient to make the gravities of the planets equal.”—Kepler was long studious to find out harmonies and proportions in the heavens; and though he wandered a great while, he hit at last upon the grand fundamental one in astronomy, viz. That the squares of the periodic times of the planets are as the cubes of their mean distances from the sun. It is of no consequence

quence to enquire minutely, whether any thing of this nature was known to the Pythagoreans; this much is certain, it was found out by imitating their manner.

TIMÆUS begins. This world, being corporeal, did not exist from eternity. It is difficult to find out the Creator and Father of the universe; and impossible to describe him to the vulgar.—Seeing this world is the most beautiful of all productions, and he the best of all causes; we need not doubt that he made it according to some unchangeable and eternal pattern. Because many have spoken concerning the gods and the creation of the heavens, you ought to be satisfied, if the account I give is at least as probable as theirs; and remember, that you who hear, and I who speak, are men. The Creator of the universe was good and free from envy; therefore he willed all things to be as like himself as possible. As the objects of sense, without intelligence, are not equal in beauty to those which

which have it; therefore he gave a soul to the body, and in that soul implanted mind. This world therefore may be defined an intelligent animal, constituted by divine Providence.—There are not many worlds created, but only one. As this world consists of visible and tangible substance, and nothing is visible without fire, or tangible without earth, therefore GOD at first created fire and earth. A mean proportional interposed between two quantities, makes all the three, as much as possible, one. But earth and fire being solids, they required two mean proportionals; namely, air and water: thus the universe, aptly cohering, cannot be dissolved but by him who connected it.—Then he describes the soul of the world, allegorically expressing, as it would seem, the number of the orbits of the planets, and the distances of those orbits from one another, in which those bodies are carried round.

WHEN therefore the Creator and Father of the universe beheld it moving, and alive,
in

in resemblance of the immortal gods, he was rejoiced and delighted with his work; and proceeded yet farther to compleat the resemblance. As an image of eternity he created time, which is measured by days, months and years, &c. which did not exist before the world began. The moon is in the orbit next the earth; then the sun, then Venus and Mercury, which sometimes overtake the sun, sometimes are overtaken by him. The reason of the situations of the other planets must be deferred till some other occasion. A month is when the moon, going round in her orbit, overtakes the sun; a year, when the sun goes round his orbit. The periodic times of the other planets are unknown, excepting to a very few. The perfect year is from the time that those eight bodies began their motions, until they return all to the same situations again. The Eternal Mind, contemplating four sorts of animals, produced them; namely, celestial, aerial, aqueous, earthly.—The most part of the substance of the celestial beings
he

he composed of fire; to each of these he gave two motions, one always in the same situation, and round the same points: the other progressive.—He formed the earth to move upon the axis of the world, the guardian of night and day, the eldest of all those bodies within the heavens; but it would be impossible to explain the stations, progressions and retrogradations of the planets, without a model. As for the dæmons, it is above our reach to speak of them; only we must believe those who lived in former times, who were the sons of the gods, as they say; for certainly they were well acquainted with their own fathers.—Then he represents the Father of the world appointing those created gods to furnish materials for the creation of inferior beings, particularly man; and gives a general description of the faculties of the human mind and body, with beautiful references to final causes.—Then he gives some account of matter; of which fire, air, water, earth, are the modifications. Earth is a fixed solid body, because the form of its
component

component particles is cubical. The particles of water are solids bounded by twenty equilateral triangles. The particles of air solids bounded by eight such triangles. The particles of fire pyramidical solids bounded by four equilateral triangles; hence they penetrate and dissolve the texture of all other bodies by their acute points.—“It must be allowed, that this hypothesis is more philosophical than Boerhave’s; for Boerhave supposes the particles of fire round, which does not so well account for their effects, nor agree with Sir Isaac Newton’s curious discovery of the different properties of the different sides of the rays of light: which is not so easily accounted for, if we suppose the particles round. This theory too, which supposes fire to be an original element, has been ascribed to Boerhave and Homberg, and called, as it were, by way of ostentation, *The modern theory of fire.*”—The attractive virtues of amber and the loadstone, were but just known in those days.—He proceeds to account for many

natural phenomena upon mechanical principles.—There is no *up* nor *down* in nature according to any one direction.—*Gravity* is the tendency of the homogeneous parts of matter to one another.—Then concerning the senses, taste, smell, hearing, seeing.—“It requires much pains, leisure, and happiness of invention, to explain the phenomena of the minute parts of matter. What we are able to discern of these charms us with a beauty and regularity, no less wonderful than the beauty and order conspicuous in the grander parts of this vast machine. Natural philosophy can be improved only through length of time. The first essays must necessarily be imperfect; yet the conjectures of ingenious men often come near the truth. Of this we have an instance in the doctrine of light and colours. Timæus here supposes, that certain colours are produced by two or more simple ones blended together; but, says, that God only can separate and compound them. This, however, Sir Isaac Newton has performed.”—

Then

Then he proceeds to give a beautiful and magnificent description of the human body, and the uses of its several parts, according to the system of anatomy in those days; and briefly describes the diseases in body or mind, to which the human race are liable, with advices for their prevention or cure.—The whole work is a beautiful poem from beginning to end, and I had almost said, it is impossible to read it without pleasure. Socrates regreted, that Anaxagoras, though he owned a creating Mind in the universe, yet confined his philosophy too much to mere matter and motion; without taking in the consideration of final causes. Timæus gives us an example of another method. It is the only poetical composition in antiquity, to shew the wisdom and goodness of God in the creation; and no one needs be afraid to compare it with Lucretius, either for argument, philosophy, or poetical description.

C R I T I A S.

AT the periodical holidays, in honour of Minerva, the poets used to exhibit their new pieces; and he who excelled was crowned with laurel. People used to come from several cities of Greece to this festival. Plato supposes, that four philosophers had met on that occasion, to entertain one another with a philosophical discourse, each a day in his turn; as if they were contending for the prize. Socrates begins and describes his plan of a republic, in consequence of an adventure which had happened him the preceeding day, when he went down to the Pireum to see the procession.—Next, after him, Timæus gives his piece on the nature of the universe.—The part of Critias is unfinished.—Hermocrates was to entertain, when Critias had done.—These three performances have a strict relation to one another, according to Plato's own account; for, Socrates forms good citizens;

zens; Timæus instructs them in the knowledge of nature; Critias was to show the good effects of this education in his intended history*.

PLATO seems to have had in view, by this discourse, to represent to his countrymen the happy consequences of virtue and good government; and the pernicious effects of vice upon a state, by the examples of the antediluvian Athenians and the Atlantic nation.—The plan was originally Solon's; and Critias is supposed to remember his poems, because his grand-father had often made him repeat them when he was a boy. There is first a brief account given of the ancient Athenians, and their extensive power, in consequence of their virtue and moderation.—The character of the Atlantic nation is described at more length, and may still

* Proclus supposes that Hermogenes was to have given the speech of Jupiter, which is not at all probable; for this speech was certainly a part of Solon's poem which Critias had learned: beside this, the narrative stops in such a manner, as plainly indicates, that the speaker had not finished what he intended to say.—As a contrast to those romantic plans of government, Hermogenes might have described the principal states and constitutions actually then existent; with reflections on the rise and fall of empires, arts and commerce.

still serve as an useful instruction to present times.—That island is represented greater than all of Africa and Asia that was known to the ancients; but was afterward sunk and destroyed by an earthquake that lasted three days; which rendered the seas opposite to the Straits of Gibraltar a long time unnavigable for mud. According to this fable, we may, if we please, suppose the Cape Verde islands, the Canaries, the Azores, the Britanic isles, to be the remaining fragments of that vast wreck.

THEY abounded in all things for the use and conveniency of life; their inland communication was easy by means of large canals; their cattle were stately and beautiful; their pastures luxuriant: rich mines of tin and other mettals abounded in the country; their commerce was extensive; the hurry and noise of sailors, coming in and going abroad, was heard in their ports night and day.—Their navy consisted of 1200 ships of war; and the arsenals were full of all sorts of naval stores. The island was divided into ten governments, ruled by the posterity of the sons

sons of Neptune, but all subordinate to one. The chief state had 60,000 chariots, with their proper furniture and riders; 10,000 were always ready for service. Their infantry were classed under several leaders to serve by rotation.—Their supreme rulers used to meet once every fifth and sixth year alternately; to examine what was amiss in their government, and wherein they had deviated from the fundamental laws.—They behaved with wisdom and moderation in the prosperous or adverse occurrences of life, and toward one another.—They valued their affluence little, when put in competition with virtue.—They did not become intoxicated and dazzled with prosperity, and then miscarry in their undertakings; but remembered and discerned, in a judicious manner, “*That all advantages are increased by public concord and public virtue.*—But, through length of time, these divine qualities gradually decayed, and human vices prevailed.—They became incapable of bearing their good fortune with decency; and appeared wretched in the eyes
of

of all true judges, for losing their virtue, the most glorious and valuable of all possessions. — But to the ignorant they still appeared in great glory, when abounding in power and plenty, founded in injustice. — Then Jupiter, god of gods, the guardian of laws and good government, and true judge of happiness, observed this generous people in distress, and resolving to chastise them for their amendment; he called a council of the gods into his most illustrious mansion, which ascends in the middle of the universe, commanding the view of all things that have existence; and when they were assembled he thus began. — But, alas! Plato did not live to give us the speech of Jove; *nec qui succederit operi, ad præscripta lineamenta inventus est.* He died suddenly at 81 years of age, in the midst of his friends, at an entertainment.

THOUGH it is impossible to prevent some regret, when thinking of the death of so great and good a man, yet we have much more reason to congratulate with the world, that ever such a person lived.



2